

APPENDIX

TO

FIVE LECTURES

ON

Attrition, Contrition, and Sovereign Love.



C. Scott



# APPENDIX

TO

## FIVE LECTURES

ON

*Attrition, Contrition, and Sovereign Love.*

BY

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## A P P E N D I X,

*&c. &c.*

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I TAKE advantage of my first leisure moment, to reconsider the propositions advanced in the preceding Lectures. By printing them I have obtained great advantage of the following kind. I have been enabled to see far more clearly than before, what are those principles which I may take for granted in the controversy, and what are those on the other hand which I must endeavour to elucidate and explain; what are those arguments which will be generally admitted, and what those on the other hand which require to be corroborated and defended against objections; in one word, what are points of general agreement, and what are points which my opponents will call in question. I shall be able therefore to give my undivided attention, to those particulars in my reasoning which really need it.

I have been much consoled to find, so far as the reception given to my Lectures enables me to judge, that the view which I oppose has a less wide reception among Catholics of the day than I had apprehended. At the same time, I am very far from denying that many persons, and those too persons whose opinions deserve very great respect and deference, differ in greater or less degree — some differ totally and very decidedly — from the propositions which I support.

It is to these persons in particular, that I am indebted for the advantage which I mentioned at starting; for it is by means of their kind criticisms that I have been able to discover, what are those principles and arguments, which it is necessary to elucidate more clearly and defend more fully.

In regard to my dear friend, Father Faber, it is with very great delight that I find there is no difference between us of principle, but only one of fact. As to the phrase, "a very moderate sorrow," quoted in my Preface, he explains himself to mean, "very moderate in comparison with God's claims;" a sense, I need hardly say, in which his statement is perfectly unexceptionable. He "does not believe that, *except in most rare cases*, a death-bed repentance sets right a life of obduracy and negligence." But he considers that "almost all Catholics live, more or less, a life of struggle towards good." As I said in my Preface, my own general impression on this *matter of fact* is of a most opposite character; though it would be simply delightful if I could change that impression. Meanwhile I feel with the greatest pleasure, that no word in this Appendix is directed against a single *principle* which Father Faber holds.

The Christmas vacation gives at last so small a degree of leisure, that I must confine my remarks within the shortest practicable compass. I will introduce therefore as little as possible of new matter; and confine myself almost exclusively to the necessary task, of explaining more clearly principles which have been misunderstood, and defending more energetically arguments which have been assailed.

The subject naturally divides itself into three heads, which I will treat in three successive chapters; though I find, on arranging my materials, that those chapters will be of very unequal length. First, I am to consider what kind of act in the penitent is necessary for valid Absolution;

Secondly, what reason there is to expect that the sinners, of whom I am speaking, will ordinarily elicit such an act; and Thirdly, what answer shall be given to objections. Objections indeed against my *argument* on the first two heads, will be in general answered *under* those heads. But there are other objections, which are taken, not directly against the force of my arguments, but against the truth of my conclusion; and there are objections also taken against various incidental remarks which I have made. It is to such objections that the answers in my third chapter will mainly be directed.

Without further preface then, let me apply myself to the work before me.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THESIS.

IN ORDER TO A VALID ABSOLUTION, THE PENITENT MUST ELICIT AN ACT OF DETESTATION, WHICH SHALL POSSESS SO GREAT A DEGREE OF EFFICACY AS TO BE INCOMPATIBLE WITH MORTAL SIN.

### SECTION I.

#### *On the distinction between efficacy and effort.*

1. I beg the particular attention of my readers to this first section, as all the controverted points in my first chapter turn on the principles which are here considered. Unless indeed this distinction between efficacy and effort be rightly apprehended, the greatest misconception of my meaning must result. Efficacy is a quality inherent in

the act itself; effort is in no sense thus inherent. The former term tends to explain the nature of *the act*; the latter term explains the greater or less difficulty experienced by *the agent* in *eliciting* such an act. And so the latter quality is sometimes called ‘*intensio agentis*,’ to distinguish it from any quality intrinsic to the act. Let me explain then in order each of these terms, as I conceive they are used in theology.

2. By the efficacy of an act is understood *the firmness or tenacity with which the will adheres in that act to the bonum proposed by the intellect*. No doubt a definition might be drawn out, which would explain the term with scientific accuracy; but it is one of those words, referring to the most ordinary processes of our mind, the meaning of which is far better understood by example than by definition. I speak naturally of my “*great degree of attachment to a motive*,” or I say, “*such a motive powerfully influences me* :” this would be expressed theologically, “*my will tends to the motive with great efficacy*.” Take a man whose whole life has been devoted to money-getting; his will ordinarily tends to that particular bonum delectabile, the acquisition of money, with far greater efficacy than does the will of a *vir timoratus*. On the other hand, the virtuousness of obeying our Creator is a motive, which acts ordinarily with far greater efficacy on the latter than on the former. Suppose I am violently tempted to mortal sin, and kneel before a crucifix; and yet even so, am overcome by the temptation. I should say, “*I have not yet succeeded in effecting, that the various good ends, to which my thoughts are directed, shall act on me with so much efficacy as to keep away mortal sin*.”

3. Now consider the word ‘*effort*’ under the same various examples. A *vir timoratus*, with very great *effort*, would not be able to effect, that the pleasure of money-



getting shall act on his will with any considerable *efficacy*; with an efficacy comparable to that, with which the *worldly man* aims at that motive without making any *effort* at all. On the other hand, in the worldly man it would require extremely great *effort*, that the virtuousness of obeying his Creator may act on him with very moderate *efficacy*. Our Blessed Lady in viâ elicited at every moment acts of unparalleled *efficacy* without the slightest *effort*. *Cæteris paribus* of course effort increases efficacy: the tempted man, kneeling before the crucifix, *uses* effort that he may *obtain* efficacy.

4. In thus discriminating between efficacy and effort, theology is not adopting any subtle or recondite process of thought; rather it is referring to a distinction, which meets us at every turn in the most every-day matters of life. I will make use of the first illustration which suggests itself; and that the rather, because it is of so very homely and ordinary a character. Consider a *blow*, possessing some certain fixed degree of intrinsic force or efficacy; just sufficient, *e. g.*, to overcome a certain definite obstacle. A very strong man will deal forth such a blow without any effort or trouble whatever; a weaker man must put forth some exertion for the purpose; a still weaker must exert his whole strength; a child, even if he does exert his whole strength, finds himself unable to accomplish it. In all these cases the intrinsic *efficacy* of the blow is one and unchanged: but the *effort*, requisite for putting the blow forth, varies quite indefinitely; according to the natural or acquired strength of each man who is called upon to attempt it.

5. It was implied in n. 3, and is very evident, that bad habits enormously increase the *effort* necessary for attaining a given degree of *efficacy*. The same result is

caused, though in a less degree, by the presence of temptation. A pious man, surrounded by holy objects, impressed by a beautiful sermon, enjoying sensible devotion, may experience great *efficacy* of will in the direction of good motives, though he put forth no great *effort* or exertion. The very same man, retaining the same degree of piety, but assailed by temptation and suffering under aridity, may put forth very much more effort, and his good act at last may reach a much lower degree of efficacy. Temptation acts upon the will, like a heavy weight drawing it in the wrong direction; it hampers and impedes it to an indefinite extent in its struggles towards good. Suppose the strong man, in my former illustration, were clogged with some cumbrous burden, which impels his arm in quite an opposite direction from that in which the blow is to be struck. He will be unable to reach the requisite degree of *efficacy*, without putting forth very far more *effort* than would be otherwise required.

From this an important conclusion follows. I suppose (which I am afterwards to prove) that a real ‘propositum’ must be an act possessing a certain definite (and indeed very considerable) degree of efficacy. It will be quite indefinitely easier for a good man, to elicit a real propositum for a short time and while temptation is away, than to preserve it for a long period and under the pressure of those various temptations which will successively assail him.

On the other hand, a *child*, though his arm were totally unimpeded, will be unable by his utmost efforts to accomplish some feat, which the *strong man*, though heavily encumbered, performs with no great difficulty. And so a man, whose will has been debased and weakened by a long course of unresisted sin, will have very far less power for good even when temptation is away, than a *good* man has when

assailed by *very considerable* temptation. But to enlarge on this belongs to the second chapter.\*

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## SECTION II.

*What conditions are necessary, that an act of the will may be incompatible with mortal sin.*

6. This question also is of fundamental importance to my argument. I will commence its treatment, by considering some of those laws which relate to the will's mode of action.

Scavini very well defines the will as follows: "*animi nostri facultas, quæ propositum ab intellectu bonum sectatur (vel malum aversatur).*" We may dispense with the three last words of this definition, by bearing in mind that the avoidance of evil is in itself a negative good; and in what follows I shall use the word 'bonum' in that more extended sense. This definition moreover, it will be seen, implies a proposition, universally expressed by theologians in the phrase "*voluntas est cæca potestas:*" it is necessary, in each instant of the will's action, that the intellect shall supply

\* On these principles I readily answer a question, which has been asked me by two or three candid enquirers. I may add, that both the question and the answer which I give to it were most clearly in my mind, before I delivered my first lecture on the subject. Supposing a novice in guilt, under the influence of strong temptation, to be eliciting acts Y and Z (see pp. 1 and 2). Let the temptation cease, it will happen again and again, that not merely act Y ceases, but act Z quite readily and without effort springs up into act R (see p. 4). But I cannot admit anything ever so distantly resembling this in the case of reckless and desperate sinners; because evil habits, in my opinion, are *far* greater obstacles to real efficacy than is the presence of temptation.

an object, shall propose a 'bonum,' at which the will may aim.

7. The will indeed may at the same moment tend to more than one bonum. It is usual with theologians however, to assign a different act of the will to each separate bonum; to consider that at least as many interior acts of the will are simultaneously proceeding, as there are various bona to which the will is at the same time tending. The only exception which I can remember to this otherwise universal usage, is the case which I have mentioned in p. 14, n. 1. And even here, as we shall see in due time, the bonum *immediately* proposed is but one; viz., the preferableness of God's service over all possible antagonistic objects.

8. Nay, the will may tend, and often does tend, at the same moment to *antagonistic* bona. Thus my will may at this moment tend, not only to the virtuousness of some good act which suggests itself, but also to the pleasurable-ness of some object, which it will be necessary to renounce if I *perform* that act. In such a case, which of the two bona I shall *absolutely* choose, the honestum or the delectabile, must by metaphysical necessity depend on the relation between those two acts, whereby my will tends respectively to one and to the other. It is evidently a contradiction in terms to say that I can choose one rather than the other, except by effecting that my desire for one shall preponderate over my desire for the other. Suppose, for instance, I am inclined at first to choose absolutely the pleasure: I *can* only *prevent* this absolute choice from becoming deliberate, by either *increasing* the degree in which my will tends to the *honestum*, or *lessening* the degree in which my will tends contrariwise to the *delectabile*, or doing both. My *liberty* of choice consists precisely in that I have the *power* of doing either of these things; and indeed of doing it to an indefinite extent.



In this case, of two antagonistic bona and a choice between them, it is said, in regard to that one which I *absolutely* choose, that my will (in thus tending to it) elicits a *preference* for it over the other, so far as the two bona are respectively apprehended by my intellect.

9. We are now able to understand what is meant, when we speak of an act which shall be "incompatible with mortal sin." Such an act must tend to some bonum honestum; and must tend to it in some such way, as that no act tending to bonum delectabile, which is mortally sinful, can by physical possibility exist in my mind simultaneously. The object of this section is, to enquire what conditions are necessary for this.

10. It follows from n. 6, that any act of the will is completely described so soon as we have been able to determine,—1st. What is that bonum proposed by the intellect to which the act tends; and 2dly. What is the will's intrinsic mode of tending to that bonum. If there are two acts, which tend to the same bonum in the same intrinsic way, these two acts are to all intents and purposes precisely equivalent.

In considering then what conditions are necessary, in order that an act of the will may be incompatible with mortal sin, I have to consider two things. First, I have to consider, of what kind is that *bonum* to which such an act must tend; and secondly, what is the intrinsic *mode* in which the will must *tend* to that bonum. First then for the first.

11. The bonum proposed by the intellect must not merely be honestum, but honestum of an universal kind. (See pp. 5, 6.) It is plain that the most excellent act of *justice* in the whole world may very easily co-exist with a mortal sin against *purity*; and, in general, no act can be incompatible with *every* kind of sin, unless the motive of

such act extend to *every* kind of objective virtue. This is one of the particulars in my argument, on which there seems absolutely no difference of opinion; and therefore I need say no more.

12. Next as to the *intrinsic mode* whereby the will tends to such universal virtuousness. In the case of *bonum honestum*, there are but two qualities, mentioned by theologians as constituting such intrinsic tendency: First, the degree of *liberty*; and secondly, the degree of *efficacy*. If there be however any other such quality, (though I am not able to imagine any), the fact would in no way affect my argument.\*

Now, as to liberty, there is no controversy at all. We are investigating the conditions necessary for an act of attrition; and every one admits that such an act must be free, or it is not available for Absolution.

The whole controversy then turns on the question of efficacy; and some of my opponents seem to hold that *no* special degree of efficacy is required. Yet such an opinion is refuted almost as soon as stated. It is one of the commonest phenomena in the whole world, that a Catholic (particularly if new to guilt) in the very moment of committing mortal sin, shall elicit an accompanying act of unwillingness based on an universal motive. "I am unwilling to do this or that wicked action, because of my Creator's claim to my obedience." (See pp. 1, 2.) Hence, in order that an act may be incompatible with mortal sin, it is absolutely necessary, not merely that it shall be directed to some universal bonum, but also that it shall adhere to that bonum with a certain degree of firmness and efficacy. Nor is this degree by any means slight or inconsiderable; very far indeed from it. Consider how

\* Unless indeed the strange position were tenable, against which I argue in chap. iii. sec. 3.

very energetic are often those acts of pious unwillingness, which those who are new to vice elicit in company with their mortal sins. But in the act which we are now considering, the will must adhere more firmly, more tenaciously, to the proposed bonum, than it does in *the most energetic* among all such possible acts. The most energetic of such possible acts may co-exist with mortal sin; but that of which *we* are in search must be so efficacious, that it *cannot* co-exist with mortal sin.

I shall presently show, that there is a direct name given in theology to this very special degree of efficacy. As to describing it, I cannot use clearer language than in my Five Lectures. I there call it act R, act of renouncement: and I observe as follows.—“Let me suppose it to have reached this efficacy, and I will call it act R, act of renouncement. Act R then is incompatible with all mortal sin. How much is implied in this? Of course *the will is indefinitely unstable, and R may very soon cease*. But this is implied, that so long as my will continues to elicit that act, mortal sin is physically impossible: my will adheres to the good motive with that degree of efficacy, which is inconsistent with all mortal sin. Let me suppose that by a miracle God fixed, or as it were stereotyped, act R in my mind, for a certain indefinite period; and I will consider the result in regard to present, past, and future. As to the present, if any temptation whatever to mortal sin enters my mind, by force of act R I am physically necessitated to resist that temptation. As to the past, if the thought of any past mortal sin enters my mind, and I ask myself the question, ‘Should I, as now disposed, commit that sin, were the very same circumstances to recur?’ by force of act R I am physically necessitated to elicit an act, of which the true analysis is this:—‘I would die rather than commit it.’ And, as to the future, if the question enters my mind at all,

‘ Shall I or shall I not at a future period commit mortal sin?’ I am necessitated by force of act R to elicit an act, of which the true analysis will be: ‘ I would rather die than commit a future mortal sin.’ So here you see are three acts,— first, resistance to present temptation; secondly, detestation of past sin; thirdly, resolution against future sin; — which follow by physical necessity from the fundamental act R.”

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### SECTION III.

#### *Theological arguments in behalf of our Thesis.*

13. I am now to enter on the proof of my fundamental Thesis, in corroboration and reinforcement of the arguments contained in the Five Lectures.

The first argument which I shall adduce is so extremely simple, that I chose it originally as the foundation of the whole. I use the letters Y and Z, to express two acts which simultaneously exist in the will; Y being a mortal sin, and Z being a good act directed to some universal motive. Every one of course admits, that act Z is no sufficient disposition for the sacrament of Penance. Now at some other period, when Y is absent, I will suppose another good act to be elicited, which I will call W. Act W shall be directed to precisely the same bonum with act Z, and in precisely the same intrinsic mode: hence (by n. 10) acts W and Z are to all intents and purposes equivalent. But act Z is no sufficient disposition for the sacrament; neither therefore is act W. But the very same argument will



apply, to every single act, founded on an universal motive, which is compatible with mortal sin : hence no such act can be a sufficient disposition.\*

14. A second argument may be derived from the very meaning of the words ‘repentance’ and ‘resolve.’ It is admitted by every Catholic in the present day, that no one is really disposed for the sacrament of Penance, who has not real repentance for the past, and real resolve for the future, in the whole matter of mortal sin. Now I ask in the first place, what is meant by saying, “I repent such a past sin?” Undoubtedly this: ‘In my present state of mind, if the circumstances were to recur, I would rather die than commit that sin.’ Or in other words: ‘My will at this moment so cleaves to this good motive or assemblage of motives, that while it continues so to cleave a repetition of the past sin would be impossible.’ If therefore my repentance be genuine, and if it extends to all past sins on an universal motive, my will at this moment so cleaves to such universal motive, as to be incapable of mortal sin unless its grasp of the motive were in some degree relaxed. An act of repentance then for past mortal sins, based on an

\* This argument was originally used by Suarez, though I had forgotten the passage when I adopted it in my lecture. “*Dieta sententia . . . sumitur ex eodem loco Concilii Tridenti dicentis, talem esse necessarium dolorem ‘qui voluntatem peccandi excludat,’ id est cum quo voluntas peccandi simul esse repugnet.* Alioquin, quamvis contingat hominem habere dolorem et non habere actualem voluntatem peccandi, si tamen dolor talis non est ut ex se repugnet simul esse cum tali voluntate, revera non est dolor qui excludit illam voluntatem, sed aliunde contingit illâ carere. . . . Præterea argumentor ratione: quia incredibile per se est eam confessionem esse validam, quæ est cum actuali proposito iterum peccandi mortaliter, et cum actuali complacentiâ peccati commissi. Sed hujusmodi propositum et complacentia esse potest cum illâ imperfectâ detestatione seu velleitate; ut per se constat, quia illi actus non sunt repugnantes. Ergo illa non est sufficiens ad valorem hujus sacramenti; si enim illa sufficeret, quicquid cum illâ conjungeretur non esset contra essentiam sacramenti.”—De Pœnitentiâ, disp. 20, sect. 4, col. 3.

universal motive, is by necessity an act incompatible with the simultaneous commission of mortal sin.\*

An argument precisely similar holds on resolve for the future. The following proposition is surely axiomatic. If I make a real resolve on some certain motive, and afterwards break it, *my will adhered more firmly to that motive when I made it, than it does when I break it.* Hence, if my resolve be to avoid all mortal sin, my will in that resolve adheres more firmly to the good motive, than it does at any time of my *committing* mortal sin: or in other words, a real act of resolve is an act incompatible (if it were but to last) with any future mortal sin. In every one's mouth who understands his own meaning, "I resolve" means a great deal more than "I sincerely intend;" it means, "I am so *firmly fixed* on doing this, that unless the degree of my adhesion to the motive be *relaxed*, I shall for certain do it." So St. Alphonsus explains a "propositum efficax;" "*id est aptum efficere quod proponitur*" (n. 451): and Scavini uses the same definition.

An act of real repentance then must be an act so efficacious, as to be inconsistent (while its efficacy remains unchanged) with the repetition of any past mortal sin; and an act of real resolve must be an act so efficacious, as to be similarly inconsistent with the committing of any possible future mortal sin.

I have been hitherto considering the almost invariable case, where each act is based on an universal motive. The supposition however is just possible (see p. 14, n. 4), that these two acts do *not* proceed on motives strictly universal. My repentance may be based on the special foulness of that one particular sin which I have committed; and my resolve on the turpitude, *e. g.*, of relapsing into any mortal sin after

\* So Busembaum, n. 6 (quoted by St. Alphonsus de Pœnitentiâ, n. 433), "*non est dolor de peccatis commissis, cum quo affectus ad ea stare potest.*"

repentance. If these acts are elicited with due efficacy, the former is incompatible with the repetition of my one past mortal sin, and the latter is incompatible (while it lasts) with the commission of any possible future mortal sin. There is a great question, whether the union of these acts suffices as a disposition for the sacrament; and on this question I have no time to enter. But the case is most rare; and all theologians earnestly recommend that the motive, both for repentance and resolve, shall be strictly universal. I have therefore not thought it necessary to take account of this exceptional case in the wording of my Thesis, nor shall I again recur to it. Every practical conclusion, which can possibly follow from my Thesis as I have worded it, would follow no less certainly if this most insignificant modification were borne in mind; as may be seen by a moment's consideration in each particular case.\* Meanwhile, the argument which I have just drawn out proves (I consider) to demonstration, that no act, directed to an universal motive, can be an act of real repentance, or of real resolve, unless it be so efficacious as to be incompatible with mortal sin.

In illustration of this, I may refer to the decree of Trent, quoted in my Five Lectures. The Council speaks (p. 21, 22) of this quality in attrition, viz. that it shall *exclude*, or be incompatible with, the will of sinning.† How is this same condition expressed in the *canons* of the Council? “*cum proposito melioris vitæ.*” The “resolve of a better life” is equivalent to an act which “excludes the will of sinning.”

15. I infer therefore, as an undeniable and most certain

\* I may as well add however, that for myself I cannot but follow those theologians (Vasquez, Coninck, Layman, Sporer, &c.), who think that in such a case Absolution is invalid: I cannot but think that the Tridentine decree supposes throughout a strictly universal motive.

† See this declared by Suarez, in the quotation given in a previous note.

truth, that the act required for Absolution, if based on an universal motive, must be an act incompatible (while its efficacy lasts) with mortal sin. I now draw attention to a somewhat different way of stating the same truth. And I do this for two reasons: first, that I may adduce and explain some very important theological expressions; and secondly, that I may answer some objections which deserve consideration.

It is stated in all treatises on Moral Theology, that an act of attrition, sufficient for Absolution, must contain a real preference given by the will to the service of God, over all possible things incompatible with such obedience. So Busembaum, n. 7 (adopted by St. Alph. n. 433, and also by Croix, n. 654): “Dolor hic debet esse *summus appretiativè*; ita ut *nihil magis detesteris* quàm peccatum, *malisque omnia mala hujus mundi perpeti* quàm mortaliter peccare.” Scavini, where he speaks of contrition in its general sense inclusive of attrition, says it must be “appretiativè summa quoad voluntatem, quatenùs voluntas peccatum *detestetur super omnia, et parata sit pœnam quamnam potiùs subire* quàm peccare mortaliter.” (De Pœnitentiâ, c. 2. a. 1. q. 2. n. 3.) And Gury: requiritur ut contritio, tum perfecta tum imperfecta, sit “*summa*; id est ut peccator detestetur crimen suum *plùsquàm omne aliud malum; et malit omnia perdere et pati* quàm peccatum patrare.” (Vol. 2. n. 328.) This indeed is implied in the very notion of an act incompatible with mortal sin; and we have seen that every real act of repentance or resolve, if based on an universal motive, must be thus incompatible: but we have here the testimony of theologians in confirmation.\*

\* These authors indeed speak strongly and very reasonably on the very great peril involved in the penitent making individual comparisons. I have explained this (p. 15, n. 5), nor have I heard of any objection to my explanation. So Scavini, “reprehendendi sunt in *praxi* (Scavini’s italics)



I have already said, that an act of the will which shall detest sin more than any other evil which can be its alternative—which shall give such a preference to the service of God as is above described—is no other than an act incompatible with mortal sin. But for further satisfaction, let me directly prove this. Now, as we have already seen, in order to describe an act of the will, it is necessary and sufficient, first, that we describe the bonum to which it tends; and secondly, that we describe its intrinsic mode of tending to that bonum. Here the bonum is evidently the preferableness of God's service over every possible antagonistic object. As to the mode of tending to that bonum, the act must of course be free; and I say it must further have that degree of efficacy, which is expressed by the phrase "incompatible with mortal sin." This is most easily proved. Act Z (see n. 13) is undoubtedly no such act of preference as is here required, given to the Creator over the creature; for at the very same moment I am preferring some creature to the Creator: hence, neither is act W such an act of preference; nor is any other act such, which is compatible with mortal sin.

16. To this statement an objection has been made of the following kind. 'Look back at the case mentioned in n. 8. 'I consider a certain virtuous act which is suggested to my mind;—and I consider a certain pleasure which I must renounce to do that act. If, under such circumstances, I make a good choice, I am truly said to elicit *an act of preference* for the good act over the antagonistic pleasure. The same reasoning applies here. Suppose I consider, generally and confusedly, the virtuousness of obeying

confessarii qui, descendentes ad particularia, pœnitentem tentant utrùm velit potiùs suspendi, comburi flammis, quàm Deum offendere: nam cùm sensibilia magis hominem moveant quàm spiritualia, periculum erit ne *tentationi succumbat*:" i.e. lest he should *change* his act of will. More on this hereafter.

‘ God ; — suppose I consider also, generally and confusedly, the pleasurable-ness of antagonistic objects ; — and then, after such consideration, decide for the former. Here also I am eliciting a *real act of preference* for God’s will over all possible antagonistic objects.’

I may here remark at starting, that this objection does not purport to answer any part of the reasoning, by which I have been brought to my own conclusion ; but merely to support an opposite conclusion by *independent* reasoning. The objector therefore, under any circumstances, would have on him the onus of answering the arguments which I have adduced.

Next, I say that a moment’s consideration shows where the fallacy lies. I *deny altogether* that in the case of n. 8, I give a preference to the bonum honestum over the pleasurable object simply and absolutely ; I only give it a preference, so far as *the pleasurable-ness of that object is at the moment apprehended by my intellect*. Nothing is more probable, than that at the next moment the very same object may be presented in a vastly more attractive shape. But if this takes place, the mere continuance (in *unchanged efficacy*) of my present virtuous act, will in no way ensure a continued preference to the bonum honestum. Again and again the very opposite will happen ; and unless I greatly *increase* the efficacy of my virtuous act, the soliciting pleasure will overbalance it. I repeat : in that original act I elicited no preference for virtue over that pleasurable object, *considered simply and absolutely* ; but only *so far as my intellect happened at the moment to apprehend its pleasurable-ness*.

I willingly admit then that the parallel urged by my opponent precisely holds ; but I consider that it is fatal to his own statement. In such a case as he supposes, I elicit no preference for God’s service over all possible antagonistic

objects, *simply and absolutely*; but only according to that most vague and uninfluential shape, in which my intellect happened to present them. On the other hand, in an act incompatible with mortal sin, the preference is given *simply and absolutely* over all possible antagonistic objects. Suppose I am eliciting such an act, and see what follows. Let us imagine that every pleasure, which can be possibly found in sinning mortally, were presented in the most alluring colours; that every pain, which can possibly be encountered in the avoidance of mortal sin, were presented in the most appalling hideousness. Well, there is the most imminent danger lest the will, so assailed, should *relax its firmness of adhesion* to the good motive; or rather it is infallibly certain that it *will* do so, unless God were to support it in that extremity of trial by the most copious supplies of His grace. But all this is quite a separate question—it refers to the probability or certainty of *the act ceasing*, and being succeeded by *another act less efficacious* (See n. 5, p. 76). But I say, if God by a miracle were to fix, or stereotype, that good act in the mind, so as to *guard it* against all diminution of efficacy; then the succumbing to any such temptation would be a thing physically impossible. The act itself may cease; that is another matter: but while it remains, it is a real preference given by the will to God's service over all antagonistic objects. The preference, I say, is given over those objects, not so far as at the moment I happen to apprehend them, but *simply and absolutely in any shape which they can possibly assume*. We thus see still more clearly, how precisely equivalent are these two ideas; “an act incompatible with mortal sin,” and “an act in which the will elicits a preference for God's service over all possible things incompatible with that service.” The act mentioned by my opponent, though remaining absolutely unchanged, may well be overborne by the superior attraction of pleasure; the act

advocated by myself as necessary, while remaining unchanged cannot by *physical possibility* be so overborne. My argument all through has been, that no act less efficacious than this can suffice for Absolution.

My opponent frankly *admits* my statement, that such an act as he advocates does *not* give to God's service a simple and absolute preference over all antagonistic objects. But he asks, "Is such a simple and absolute preference requisite?" I have already put forth various theological arguments, for holding most firmly that it is. The necessary act, as we have seen, must prefer obedience to God's will over *everything incompatible with such obedience*. But any antagonistic object, however attractively and vividly proposed, is a "thing incompatible with such obedience;" hence the necessary act must prefer obedience to God's will over every antagonistic object, *however attractively and vividly proposed*. Again, any other doctrine (as we have seen) will imply the intense absurdity, that W is an act of attrition and Z is not: in other words, that an act, remaining the very same, remaining intrinsically unchanged, may be first an act of attrition, then cease to be one, and then be one again, accordingly as it does, or does not, happen to be overborne at the moment by an adverse act towards bonum delectabile; accordingly as this or that pleasure may, or may not, happen to be more vividly and attractively proposed.

So much by way of recapitulation as to the reason of the case. The question of *authority* is to be directly considered in the fifth section; but meanwhile look at the various phrases which I have just quoted from theologians. "You must prefer to endure all the evils of this world rather than sin mortally," say Busembaum, St. Alphonsus, and Croix. "You must be prepared to endure any punishment whatsoever," says Scavini. "You must prefer to lose everything, and to suffer everything," says Gury. Where



is to be found the least hint of this all-important qualification, "*So far as your intellect happens to realise* those evils, those punishments, those things which are to be lost and suffered"? In what single corner of theology is any such qualification to be found? And yet what qualification can be imagined, which it would be more important to place prominently and on the surface, if it were really intended?

I can imagine indeed an objection made to my reasoning, of the following kind. The objector might say to me: 'You must admit yourself, that this qualification is necessarily implied in *one* term of the comparison; and if in *one*, why not in the other? You must admit yourself, that the *service of God* can only be preferred to things incompatible, *so far as the thought of God's service is apprehended by the intellect.*' I reply however most easily, by totally denying any such statement. It would be most untrue to say, that in order to elicit an act of sufficient attrition, I must prefer the service of God as *now apprehended by me* to all incompatible things. On the contrary, one of the very best ways of *obtaining* sufficient attrition (I should even say the only way of doing so) is to apprehend *more* vividly, *more* efficaciously, *more* impressively, the thought of God and His claims.

Indeed, how violently and extravagantly my opponent's doctrine is opposed to that taught by theologians, will be abundantly manifest from one single remark. It is agreed by all, that if the penitent very speedily relapses into sin, and especially if he does so without making any resistance, he throws the greatest possible doubt over the sufficiency of his past dispositions. St. Alphonsus says, that if he ordinarily so falls within two or three days, it is *morally certain* that the due dispositions were absent.\* Now on

\* "*Aliud tamen judicium fieri debet, si pœnitens plerumque statim ceciderit, post duos nempe vel tres dies à confessione factâ, quin aliquo modo*

my opponent's doctrine, a relapse in the very next moment, and that without the slightest resistance, (however frequently it took place) could not be considered *without the grossest absurdity* as throwing a *shadow* of suspicion on the sufficiency of a man's past dispositions. I am regarded by my opponent as duly disposed, if I sincerely prefer the service of God to all antagonistic objects, so far as they are at the moment intellectually presented. I elicit such an act of preference; and the very next moment, being assailed by some fresh temptation, I consent to it as a matter of course without the slightest resistance. Here a *new* sinful object has entered my mind; or else an object, which was there before, is represented with a most sudden and (as it were) violent increase of attractiveness. As a matter of course, I have *succumbed* to that object so presented. How can this fact throw *the slightest suspicion* on the truth of my allegation, that in the previous moment I sincerely preferred God's service to all sinful objects, so far as they were *then* in my mind? This new object, of course, was *not* then in my mind; or if there at all, was there in a shape essentially different.

17. 'But,' urges my opponent, and this (I think) he regards as his strongest ground, 'there *can* be no such act 'R as you describe; there *can* be no act which would be 'thus incapable of co-existing with mortal sin.' Yet surely a moment's thought will show clearly that the fact is otherwise.

Suppose I were a person, who, after long habits of sin, had risen to high perfection; and that I had a mind sufficiently educated and cultivated, to contemplate steadily its own phenomena. Suppose, in the midst of a fervent meditation, I reflect on what passes in my interior. I see,

tentationi obstitit; tunc enim videtur *moraliter certus* doloris ac propositi defectus.—St. Alphonsus, Praxis Confessarii, n. 20, ad finem.

without the possibility of mistake, that in my various universal acts the good motives act on me so very powerfully, that, *unless their hold on me were very greatly relaxed*, mortal sin would be physically impossible. I am not more sure of my existence than of this fact. On the other hand, if I have a clear recollection of those early struggles, when I was first beginning slowly to emerge from the slough of sin, I may make an opposite remark. I can easily remember *many* acts directed to universal motives, which (though not actually accompanied by mortal sin) yet (as I now most clearly see) were so weak and languid, that mortal sin might easily have *supervened*, without any relaxation of the hold over me which these good motives possessed. In the continuous interval then, between those early very weak, and these later very efficacious, acts, there must, by metaphysical necessity, be one point (known precisely to God alone) where that degree of efficacy commences, which renders the act incompatible with mortal sin. Acts, which possess a lower degree of efficacy than this, are no sufficient dispositions for the sacrament.

My opponent considers that there is something very wonderful in the possibility of such an act; but I confess I see nothing in it to excite astonishment. It seems to me but one of very many particulars, which might be most interestingly brought together, tending in various ways to show very clearly that our nature was formed for virtue.

I cannot but consider then that this objection, or rather this series of objections, is totally destitute of weight. As to the objector's doctrine, I have already (I hope) made clear that it is readily disproved by theological arguments; and I trust presently to show, that it is wholly at variance with that put forth by the Council of Trent and by the whole

body of theologians. But as to the objector himself (a very dear friend of mine, and the chief methodical adversary with whom my Five Lectures have brought me into conflict), I may be allowed to say one word. I cannot refrain from bearing testimony, to the extreme ability with which he has advocated his view; the clearness with which he has laid his finger on the point at issue; and the great kindness and forbearance, with which he has received the expression of an opinion which inflicts on him severe pain. I can judge of the pain which my own doctrine inflicts on an opponent, from my keen consciousness of that which his inflicts upon me.\*

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#### SECTION IV.

*On the theological terms 'velleity' and 'inefficacious' act.*

18. Theologians often speak, not merely of one act being more efficacious than another, but of one as efficacious and another as *inefficacious*; and it may be asked, what is their meaning? This question is completely irrelevant to my argument; so much so, that any one who pleases may omit this section, without losing one step of my reasoning. And I am anxious to state this explicitly, because I am not prepared to deny that there is a certain variety of usage among

\* There is one notion, sometimes taken up thoughtlessly and without reflection, which is too obviously absurd to be worth serious refutation; yet as I think it really does from time to time possess men's minds, it should not be entirely omitted. It is fancied then sometimes, that I elicit an act of preference to the Creator over creatures, if I *intellectually recognise His preferableness over them*. But of course every Catholic, however depraved, must intellectually recognise this. Hence from this preposterous notion it would follow, that the most wicked Catholic, if he elicits an act of faith in the above undoubted doctrine, is at once sufficiently disposed for Absolution.



theologians on this matter. I don't mean to say that there is any difference of meaning at all, when they say, "this act is *more* efficacious than that;" for I am convinced that there is none. But I am not prepared to deny, though neither am I quite prepared to affirm, that there is some variety of sense, when they speak of an act as *simply* 'efficacious' or 'inefficacious.' At all events, there is one most definite meaning, which is *very far more commonly* affixed to the phrase; and it will throw light on various theological statements connected with our subject, if I proceed to explain what I consider that meaning to be.

Take then our old act W (see nn. 13 and 15, pp. 82, 87). It is not (as we have seen) really a preference given by the will to God's service over all incompatible things; and yet that bonum, to which the act tends, is no less than the *preferableness* of God's service over all such things. Such an act then is not *sufficient to achieve my aim*: I *aim* at preferring God's service to all incompatible things, because of the virtuousness of so doing; yet, I do not *in fact* so prefer it. This, then is ordinarily called in theology an *inefficacious* act, in reference to that bonum at which it aims; or an *inefficacious* pursuit of the proposed bonum. So when theologians speak of an '*efficax* propositum.' The bonum honestum, at which my will aims in such an act, is the obligation of avoiding all mortal sin. My propositum is real and '*efficax*,' if it be such as is *sufficient to achieve my aim*; in other words, intrinsically sufficient (if it did but continue) to *fulfil* this my obligation.

19. And here we see the meaning of theologians, when they lay down that no degree of *intensity* is requisite, either for contrition or attrition. Both contrition and attrition, each according to its appropriate motive, must give a *real* preference to God's service over all incompatible things; but it need not be an *intense* preference. The *very lowest*,

the most remiss, preference suffices, if it be a preference *at all*. The act must be *efficacious*; but it need not be efficacious beyond the very lowest point, at which it may justly claim the name of 'efficacious' at all. If it be *inefficacious*, it is an act different *in kind* from the required act; just as an act of inchoate love (see p. 18), or of imperfect faith, differs *in kind* from an act of faith or of love which is *super omnia*. In one word—it is by no means necessary, that in my act of repentance I *intensely* prefer God to creatures; but I must *really* prefer Him to them all.

20. The word 'velleity,' as more commonly used in theology, is simply synonymous with 'inefficacious act.' Some of my opponents indeed seem to think, that a velleity is not really such unless I *reflect on it*; unless I *say to myself*, "I would avoid sin A, were it not for pleasure B." But this is most easily refuted. In act Z indeed I *say to myself* as above, because I know that I am simultaneously committing mortal sin: but in act W I say to myself nothing of the kind. Yet I have already shown, that act W is in all respects equivalent to act Z; and hence, if the latter be a mere velleity, the former must be a mere velleity also.

I may further adopt a "reductio ad absurdum." On the view which I am now opposing, a velleity, in regard to the avoidance of mortal sin, *never can exist except in company with mortal sin*. For consider—If I *say to myself* as above, it is implied by the very fact of reflection that I *think of* pleasure B; that I elicit the act "rather than lose pleasure B, I would commit sin A." But this is plainly a mortal sin. Hence on the view which I am opposing, no velleity towards the avoidance of mortal sin could possibly exist, except in company with mortal sin.

Now how utterly repugnant this is to the whole language of the post-Tridentine scholastics, is a fact, for the truth of which I confidently appeal to all who are familiar

with their writings.\* Where I might quote many instances, it may suffice (on a minor matter) if I produce one. I will refer therefore to the passage from Suarez, cited in the note to n. 13 (p. 83). The cogency of the quotation will be seen more evidently, if I supply the intermediate sentence which I there omitted. “At verò, quoties displicentia de peccato talis est, ut ex se habeat adjunctam solam *velleitatem* non peccandi, quantum est ex se *non excludit* voluntatem peccandi; quia *voluntas* peccandi et *velleitas* non peccandi optimè *possunt* esse simul. Ergo talis displicentia insufficiens est etiam ad valorem hujus sacramenti.”

You see, he does not say that a velleity always *does* co-exist with the ‘voluntas peccandi;’ in the preceding sentence he distinctly affirmed the contrary. He said it may well *happen* that a velleity exists *without* the company of mortal sin (quamvis *contingat* hominem habere [talem] dolorem et *non* habere *actualement* voluntatem peccandi); yet a velleity is not such an act as to be in its own nature *repugnant* to the company of such sin. It may, or it may not, at this particular moment *in fact* co-exist with it; but it is not *intrinsecally incompatible* with it.

In the 3d section of the 3d chapter, I shall have a few more words to say on the theological use of these various terms.

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## SECTION V.

### *Theological authority in behalf of our thesis.*

21. There has been much argument raised, as to what is *meant* by an act “incompatible with mortal sin;” but I

\* I speak of post-Tridentine, not as having the least suspicion that earlier scholastics express themselves differently, but because I am quite unacquainted with them: except indeed so far as St. Thomas is concerned, and Scotus in a very slight degree.

am not aware of any objection which has been taken, to the theological authority adduced by me as proving, that an act of sufficient attrition must *be* thus incompatible. I may therefore comprise what additional remarks I here make, within far narrower limits than would have been otherwise necessary.

My most important authority of course was the Tridentine decree. I drew out an argument (p. 19 to 23), to show that this decree undoubtedly requires for Absolution an act which shall be incompatible with mortal sin; in that this is the very lowest sense which can be ascribed to those forcible words, “*si excludat voluntatem peccandi.*” I have not heard of any objection whatever being taken to my argument on this head; and shall content myself therefore with adding the name of Suarez to those theologians who are cited in the note to p. 21. The passage from Suarez, quoted in n. 20, and in the note to n. 13 (pp. 83, 97), is most express and decisive as to *his* interpretation of the decree.

The next authority, or rather body of authority, which I adduced, was the language held by those great theologians, Vasquez, Bellarmine, Valentia, Suarez, Lugo, Ripalda, Viva, on the nature of that act which we call an act of ‘*amor super omnia*’ (p. 23–26). I might have added quite indefinitely to these names, as indeed my opponents admit; but it was plainly unnecessary. My argument was this. All these theologians expressly say, that an act of sovereign love differs from an act of love which is *not* ‘*super omnia*’ in this precise particular, that the former must be an act *incompatible with mortal sin*. Now it is an admitted matter in theology, that an act of *contrition* has the same intrinsic efficacy with an act of sovereign love; and an act of *attrition* again the same with an act of contrition. The doctrine held by all these writers, on the subject of attrition and contrition, bases the difference between these two acts on a difference of *motive*, and in no respect on a difference of intrinsic



efficacy (p. 26). So far as I am aware, the whole of this has been admitted by my greatest opponents. I will only therefore add a few words, for the purpose of placing in a clearer light the inference which I draw from these quotations.

22. There are then two different kinds of acts of amor benevolentiae, mentioned in theology; those which are ‘super omnia,’ and those which are *not* ‘super omnia:’ and the question now before us is, how are they distinguished from each other? They are not distinguished by the *motive*; this is very evident, else they would *not* both be acts of amor benevolentiae. Moreover, this is evidently implied in all the adduced passages; and is expressly stated both by Lugo in his first passage, and by Suarez in his second. I may add a still more decided statement of the same kind, from the latter theologian. “Punctum est an ad omnem amorem *ex proprio motivo caritatis*, id est propter bonitatem Dei ut objectum beatificum, necessaria sit gratia, etiamsi amor ille in suo ordine imperfectus sit. . . . Imperfectus amor esse potest cum peccato, non solum habituali, sed etiam actuali.” (De Gratiâ, l. 2. c. 15. n. 2.)

The previous chapter had been occupied with ‘amor super omnia;’ and the present chapter is occupied with that ‘amor imperfectus,’ which he *opposes* to ‘amor super omnia.’

The motive then being undoubtedly the same in these two acts, what is the distinction drawn between them by theologians? Is it merely that an act belongs to the lower class, when *it so happens* that mortal sin simultaneously exists; and to the higher when it does *not* so happen? I pass over the intellectual absurdity of supposing that two acts, intrinsically the same, can deserve two different names from a purely extrinsic circumstance; because I am here enquiring as to the testimony of theologians. Now Suarez (in the second quotation), Valentia, and Lugo (in the first

quotation), expressly refer to acts of love which are *not* super omnia; and yet the context most plainly shows that they are referring to cases where mortal sin does *not* co-exist. Again, throughout the characteristic of an act ‘super omnia,’ is declared to be, not that ‘peccatum mortale non componitur,’ but ‘componi non potest.’ Are we to suppose that one and all of these great writers, as if by some fatality, having a most simple idea to express, have adopted the most strange and unnatural way possible for expressing that idea? nay, and have combined in the very *same* strange and unnatural way? A few pages later, I shall have to enlarge further on this argument.

The theologians, whom I have cited, *must* therefore mean, that there is some intrinsic quality in the act itself, which renders it *incapable* of co-existing with mortal sin. But the *motive* at which the two acts aim is identically the same, as we have just seen; what can possibly remain then, but that the difference is one of *intrinsic efficacy*? So both Suarez and Ripalda use the very same word ‘*efficax*,’ to express the point of difference; referring us to that sense of the word ‘*efficax*’ which I explained in n. 18 (p. 95). Lugo is still more explicit. He calls an act of sovereign love ‘*perfectior et efficacior*’ than the other; “in it,” he says, “*ita efficaciter voluntas fertur in Deum ut*,” &c.; and he contrasts this efficacy with the ‘*debilitas intrinseca*’ of an imperfect act. Again, Marinus, a Jesuit theologian, says (Tract. 16, disp. 1, n. 96), “*si sit ita ardens detestatio furti ex motivo caritatis, ut sit incomponibilis cum omni alio peccato lethali actuali*,” &c.

These theologians then (and I might have added indefinitely to their number) declare that an act of love is called ‘super omnia,’ precisely because it is so intrinsically efficacious as to be incompatible with mortal sin: they are very far therefore from holding, with my principal oppo-

ment, that an act thus intrinsically incompatible cannot by possibility exist. On this however more in n. 26. It follows also, from the chain of reasoning drawn out in n. 21 (p. 98), that according to these theologians, an act of attrition, no less than one of love, must *be* thus incompatible, or else no Absolution will follow.

23. I think it is desirable to show by a few instances, how clearly this is stated in the ordinary text-books of Moral Theology. Thus Busembaum, quoted and appropriated both by St. Alphonsus and Croix, n. 8, “*Propositum vitandi peccata mortalia efficac, id est cum quo non possit consistere affectus actualis erga aliquod mortale. . . . Non est dolor et detestatio efficac, quippe cum quo possit stare voluntas peccandi; nec is se ex toto corde convertit ad Deum, detestans peccatum super omne detestabile.*” So Andreucci again, in the little treatise ‘de Recidivis’ appended to the later editions of Busembaum. The whole object of this treatise is to recommend great facility in absolving recidivi; yet let us see the author’s doctrine—“*Propositum sufficiens ad sacramentum Pœnitentiæ non exigit ut ipsum sit efficac effective [see Five Lectures, p. 26] pro omnibus instantibus subsequentibus; sed quòd sit ipsum, pro instanti quod nunc est, inconjungibile cum actuali animo unquam in posterum peccandi; et consequenter vi suâ excludat pro eo instanti omnem prorsus affectum unquam peccandi.*” (n. 3.) To the same purpose are the passages quoted by me in n. 15 (p. 86), on the preference which must be given to the Creator’s service over all possible incompatible things.

A passage from the Roman Catechism has indeed been alleged, as different in spirit: but I am quite sure any one, on carefully referring to it, will consider it as containing the very same doctrine. It is this: “*Si [sacerdos] auditâ confessione judicaverit neque in enumerandis peccatis diligen-*

tiam nec in detestandis dolorem pœnitenti omnino defuisse, absolvi poterit." (Pars 2, c. 5, q. 58.) In regard to what kind of penitent is this said? in regard to one, who shall have affirmed to the priest that he has employed *all study and diligence* (omne studium et diligentiam suam contulisse) to remember his sins and excite in himself attrition.\*

The word 'dolor' is here evidently used, as it commonly is, to express real and efficacious attrition. It is very seldom (if ever) employed to express a mere velleity or inefficacious act, except with such an addition as 'dolor *quidam*,' or 'dolor *imperfectus*.' And in general illustration of the spirit in which the Roman Catechism treats this subject, I may refer to the beginning of q. 28, and of this very q. 58.

24. I will next give a quotation which a friend has shown me, from Pinamonti, the well-known companion of F. Segneri. He is explaining what is meant by the theo-

\* "Alii sunt, qui, vel quòd raro peccata sua confiteri solent, vel quòd nullam curam et cogitationem in pervestigandis suis sceleribus posuerunt, nec commissa confessione expedire, nec unde ejus officii initium ducendum sit, satis sciunt; quos certe *acrius objurgare* opus est, atque *in primis docere*, priusquam ad sacerdotem aliquis adeat, *omni studio curandum esse*, ut peccatorum suorum *contritione commoveatur*: id vero præstari nullo modo posse, nisi ea reminiscendo sigillatim recognoscere studeat. Quare si sacerdos hujusmodi homines prorsus imparatos esse cognoverit, humanissimis verbis à se demittet, hortabiturque, ut ad cogitanda peccata aliquod spatium sumant, ac deinde revertantur. Quod si forte *affirmaverint*, se in *eam rem omne studium et diligentiam suam contulisse*, quoniam sacerdoti maximè verendum est, ne semel dimissi amplius non redeant, audiendi erunt; præsertim vero, si emendandæ vitæ studium aliquod præ se ferant, adducique possint, ut negligentiam suam accusent, quam se alio tempore diligenti et accuratâ meditatione compensaturos promittant; in quo tamen magna cautio adhibenda est. Si enim auditâ confessione judicaverit, neque in enumerandis peccatis diligentiam, neque in *detestandis dolorem*, pœnitenti omninò defuisse, absolvi poterit. Sin autem utrumque in eo desiderari animadverberit, auctor illi et suasor erit, ut majorem curam, quod antea dictum est, in excutiendâ conscientia adhibeat, hominemque, ut blandissimè poterit, tractatum demittet." [Pars 2, c. 5, q. 58.]



logical statement, that ‘*attritio*’ must be ‘*summa* ;’ and he says, “*deve detestarli [peccato] sopra ogni male apprezzativamente ; cioè a dire con tanto vigore che l’ anima per virtù di quell’ atto [See Five Lectures, p. 5], prima che peccare, elegerebbe qualsisia altro male, che può venire in competenza col peccato.*” La via del cielo appianata, lez. 2.

I quote F. Pinamonti for two reasons. First, some seem to think that the doctrine which I am urging is not of such very great practical importance. Far otherwise thinks this holy missionary ; he is stating it as the one admitted doctrine, and is stating it for the same purpose as my own—for the purpose of showing the extreme improbability, that reckless sinners will truly repent.\* Secondly, Pinamonti expressly states, what is that *quality* in an act which renders it incompatible with mortal sin ; viz. its degree of *efficacy*—“*con tanto vigore.*”

25. The last supplementary quotations shall be from Francolinus. The one great object of this writer’s theological life, seems to have been advocating the most lenient possible doctrine and practise, as to the conferring of Absolution. Two of his works on the subject I have not yet been able to procure ; it is from the third ‘*de dolore ad sacramentum Pœnitentiæ necessario,*’ that I now quote. The following two passages will amply exhibit his doctrine ; but having read the volume through with great care, I can testify that he is consistent on the matter throughout. “*Et quoad primum requisitum, concedo ab displicentiâ peccati ex metu inferni, quâ tali præcisè, non excludi peccandi voluntatem : nam potest esse displicentia inefficax, et afferens solam quandam non peccandi velleitatem ; quæ certè stare potest cum peccandi voluntate. Et idè non dicimus sufficere in sacra-*

\* “*Posto tutto questo, che è indubitato, io vi prego a considerare se sia probabile che chi pecca si francamente, con dire ‘mi confesserò’ tanto mi ho da confessare, abbia vero dolore delle sue colpe, e l’ abbia fin a quel segno che abbiamo detto. A me par manifesto che nò.*”

mento *quemcunque dolorem* seu displicentiam peccati ex metu gehennæ conceptam; sicuti nec sufficit *quævis* displicentia peccati ex *motivo bonitatis divinæ* concepta, quæ *similiter potest esse inefficax*, et conjungi cum voluntate peccandi. Sed dicimus, sufficere eum solum dolorem peccati, conceptum ex metu, *qui sit efficax*; qui videlicet verè ex tali metu detestetur peccatum, et positivè, absolutè, et *resolutè* (ut dicunt) velit non ampliùs peccare.”—L. 1, c. vi. n. 68.

In the other passage he is arguing (very justly and forcibly in my opinion) against the doctrine which would maintain, that the requisite act of attrition must detest sin even more than eternal torments. Yet see how faithfully he keeps to the same fundamental principle. “. . . *cùm Christus non requisierit in hoc sacramento dolorem perfectissimum, sed eum dolorem, quo quis absolutè doleat de peccato ex motivo et auxilio supernaturali, et proponat non peccare ampliùs; qui dicitur appretiativè maximus modo explicato: et quia, si sit facienda aliqua comparatio, est talis dolor, ut dolens mallet incurrisse et velit potiùs incurrere quodvis malum, quod potest concurrere cum peccato, quod est malum temporale; et similiter amittere quodvis bonum cum peccato conjunctum, quod similiter non potest esse nisi temporale; quàm peccare. Hinc etiam optimi pœnitentes hoc solum propositum solent facere: ‘Volo potiùs mori, quam peccare.’ Et ratio est, quia hoc sufficit, ut quis à peccato se avertat et non peccet ampliùs; cùm sola mala temporalia concurrant cum peccato, et sola bona temporalia alliciant ad peccandum.*”—L. 1, c. vi., n. 45.

26. This will be the appropriate place for some further remarks, on the kind and able opponent of whom I have already spoken.

And here, as I am to begin a hand-to-hand conflict with one single opponent, non-combatants may find it very dull

if they stay to look on. In other words, those who (however opposed to me in other respects) do not share in the objection put forth by this particular adversary, will lose nothing, and save themselves much ennui, by passing on at once to n. 27 (p. 110). In the present number I must ask for some considerable exertion, on the part of my readers; I must ask them, very carefully to bear in mind the theses which are respectively advocated by my opponent and myself, and to study very accurately, one by one, the various passages which are to be brought in medium.

My opponent then holds, that any act disposes sufficiently for the sacrament, which gives a preference to the service of God over all antagonistic objects, *so far forth as the latter may be at the moment intellectually presented*. In other words, he holds that any act suffices, which is directed to an universal motive, and which *is not actually accompanied by mortal sin*. That the latter proposition follows from the former is most obvious, For consider: by hypothesis I am thinking, on the one hand of obedience to God in grave matters; on the other hand of certain antagonistic objects. I either (1) give a preference to the former, or (2) to the latter, or (3) balance between them. Either of the two latter acts is a mortal sin: the former act is regarded by my opponent as a sufficient disposition. Hence every act, directed to an universal motive, and not actually accompanied by mortal sin, is regarded by him as a sufficient disposition. And this indeed is his very statement (see c. 3, sec. 3): ‘there *can* be no mere act Z when Y is absent.’

I may add (as is evident, and I believe he assents) that by parity of reasoning, every act is an act of sovereign love, which (1) is directed to the appropriate motive, and (2) gives a preference to the will of God *upon* that motive over all antagonistic objects, *so far forth as the latter are intellectually presented*. In other words, an act of love is necessarily

an act ‘super omnia,’ if it be not actually united with mortal sin. Otherwise indeed Z *could* exist without Y.

So far as *reason* is concerned, I trust I have in the preceding sections most superabundantly refuted this doctrine.\* The *practical consequences*, which would follow from its consistent adoption, and which to me seem more fearful than I can adequately express, shall be considered in the third chapter (nn. 62, 63, pp. 159–164). It is the question of *theological authority* which here concerns us.

So far as individual passages from theologians are concerned, I am quite certain I shall be borne out by all, who are at all familiar with the post-Tridentine scholastics, in the following remark. A doctrine, contradictory to my opponent, is so undeviatingly assumed as a first principle, so interwoven in the whole texture of their reasoning on relevant subjects, that it requires some careful research, to light on any large number of passages in which it is directly and explicitly stated; and for such research I have at this moment unfortunately no leisure. Yet I will bring together a few individual passages, which happen to be at hand, before I proceed to considerations of a more general character.

We have seen (n. 20, and note to n. 13) that Suarez, in most express terms, contradicts my opponent. He says that an act which does not *exclude*, which is not *repugnant to*, all will of sinning, is no sufficient disposition; yet that such an act may often *in fact* exist *without* such concomitant act of sin: “Quamvis contingat hominem habere dolorem et non habere actualem voluntatem peccandi, si tamen dolor talis non est ut *ex se* repugnet simul esse cum tali voluntate, revera non est dolor qui EXCLUDIT illam voluntatem.”

Lugo (quoted in p. 24) expressly says, that an act of love may be ‘imperfect’ and *not* ‘sovereign,’ although it

\* Subject of course to the discussion reserved for c. 3. sec. 3.



be not in a conditional form, from mere want of intrinsic efficacy. "*Licet non sit explicitè conditionatus, non est tamen ita efficax ut,*" &c. An act of love, according to Lugo, falls short of being 'super omnia' and is merely 'imperfectus,' not because of any concomitant act of sin, but '*propter debilitatem intrinsecam.*' See however the whole passage.

Both Valentia and Suarez, as I have already observed (n. 22, p. 99), when actually speaking upon acts of *imperfect love*, imply that they may well exist without the actual company of mortal sin, supposing severe temptation to be away.\*

Take again my second quotation from Viva (p. 25). He says that if I love God above *my friends*, but not above father and mother and *all things*, I love Him 'veluti ex corde diviso.' It is an admitted principle, that acts of 'attritio summa' are equal in intrinsic efficacy with acts of contrition; and differ from them only in the motive. Hence (according to Viva), an act, in which I give to God's service a preference over all my friends, but not over father and mother, can never be an act of 'attritio summa.' Now will any one venture to say, that I am *always mortally sinning* whenever I am thus preferring God's service to all 'my friends'? Are my 'father and mother' always *actually opposing themselves* to God's service? What can be more preposterous? If they *do* so oppose themselves, then of course, this act 'ex corde diviso,' (though it were to remain) would fail to secure me from mortal sin; but whenever 'my friends' constitute the *only* antagonistic bonum, then my good act, though it *be* but 'ex corde diviso,' necessitates me (while it lasts) to reject their solicitations.

Once more: Vasquez, cited and confirmed by Viva (as quoted in the note to p. 21), says, "Tridentinum non dicit

\* Suarez is explaining that act of love, which the Council of Trent requires as a disposition for justification. I suppose he did not consider the Council to require for that purpose an act *which implies the company of mortal sin*. Valentia's words speak for themselves. See p. 24.

quòd voluntas peccandi excludi debeat ab eo qui atteritur, sed ab *ipsâ attritione*." It is not enough then that mortal sin shall not *in fact* coexist; a further condition is necessary. That the act of attrition shall *exclude* mortal sin, means *something more* than that mortal sin shall not in fact simultaneously exist; whereas, on my opponent's view, it means *nothing* more.

Layman (quoted in p. 28) has said (beginning the quotation a few words earlier), "[Propositum] *non tantum absolutum* sed etiam efficax esse debet; ita ut dum *talis animi dispositio* seu voluntatis propositum *manet*, reipsâ moveatur homo ad occasiones peccatorum removendas," &c. The word 'absolute' is often (though by no means always) taken, as it is here, in opposition to 'conditionatum;' to signify an absolute intention; an absolute choice; a good act, which is not *in fact* overborne by one of an opposite character. Layman says expressly that this *does not suffice*; that the propositum must be 'efficacious' as well. And how does he explain this word 'efficacious?' The act must be such, that (so long as it continues unchanged) the penitent is quite certainly moved to withdrawing from all occasions of sin, &c. Of course Layman is not referring to the mere *fact* that such a penitent afterwards *does* labour at removing occasions; he is speaking, as all admit, of some quality intrinsic to the present act. There *is* such a quality then, totally distinct from the *absoluteness* of the act, which (if it do but remain) will *ensure* all necessary *means* being taken. But my opponent, in direct opposition to Layman, holds that *any absolute* act suffices.

I now pass however, to considerations of a more general character. I have brought together a considerable number of passages, one of them indeed from the Tridentine decree itself, (and my opponent will admit that I might have indefinitely added to the number) in which it is declared that the requisite act must '*exclude*,' must be '*incompatible with*,' all mortal sin. My opponent maintains that no more is

meant by this, than that the act does not *in fact coexist* with mortal sin. I ask then this obvious question—if this is the meaning of all these authorities, *why has not one of them ever thought of saying this?* Let my opponent show me (if he can) one single passage in one single theologian, where an act sufficient for Absolution is declared to be, “an act directed to an universal motive, and not actually coexisting with mortal sin.” If he can show me one such passage, I will admit myself so far defeated: but if he cannot, I think he on his part ought to admit *himself* so far defeated; defeated, I mean, on the ground of theological authority. How is it possible to believe (as I lately asked) that a great body of theologians, having a most simple and obvious idea in their minds, have combined in a sort of insane conspiracy, to state that one idea in the most forced and roundabout way which could be imagined? Nay, and should all agree in choosing *the same* most forced and roundabout way?

But the argument in fact is much stronger than this. On the one hand, we find Suarez, Viva, and Vasquez expressly declaring, that an act may well be *unaccompanied* by mortal sin, which yet is not *incompatible* with it; and on the other hand we find that all theologians, without one single exception, use the *latter* expression and *not* the former, to describe the quality required in sufficient attrition. The two expressions have quite a different signification, and theologians *invariably* choose the *latter* expression.

I refer, in the same connexion, to the fact mentioned by me in n. 16 (p. 90). The universal language of theologians is, that an act of sufficient attrition is an act, giving a preference to God's service over all possible antagonistic objects. As to the all-important qualification introduced by my opponent—*so far forth as they happen at the moment to be intellectually apprehended*—I firmly believe you will search in vain for it through all the folios on moral theology which were ever written.

And I refer also to my other argument, from authority, there drawn out. All Theologians without exception regard a speedy relapse, without resistance, as throwing the gravest doubt over a man's past disposition. But such an opinion is not less than *extravagantly absurd*, if the necessary disposition be no more than my opponent supposes. (See p. 91, 92.)

There is a final argument from authority, which (as it seems to me) even if it stood alone, would be of not less than decisive weight. It happens, I will not say frequently but far *most commonly*, that those bona, antagonistic to God's service, which happen at any particular moment to be intellectually presented, solicit only to *one or two particular kinds of sin*. Hence it will happen far most commonly, that an act, *based on no universal motive at all*, will yet give a most real preference to God's service over all possible antagonistic bona, *so far as they are intellectually presented*. Yet there is no matter on which theologians are more unquestionably unanimous, than on their requirement of an *universal* motive: the only exception to such unanimity being that most insignificant case, which I have mentioned and explained in n. 14 (p. 85). It is most absolutely certain therefore, that no theologian would admit the sufficiency, for Absolution, of a preference given to the service of God over all antagonistic bona, *so far as they are intellectually presented*. It is most absolutely and undeniably certain, that the introduction of this qualifying clause would be fatal to the whole meaning which they intend to express. So much then for the present on this particular controversy.

27. I must not however terminate this section, without some notice of a very remarkable work, by a very eminent theologian, F. Faure. I had barely heard the name of this work when I delivered my five lectures; but have since owed my possession of it to the kindness of two friends, and have studied it carefully. It is with great reluctance



that I have abandoned the intention, of replying to it in detail on the present occasion. For certainly my cause must have greatly gained, from showing the strange shifts to which an eminent theologian is reduced, in attempting to reconcile any doctrine, more lenient than mine, with the plain words of Trent. I am most anxious, as soon as possible, to fulfil my design; and I hope then also to reprint the relevant chapters in F. Faure's work, in order that the reader may judge on the fairness of my criticism. Meanwhile a few words on the subject even now seem imperatively called for.

At what time of his life F. Faure adopted the views which are stated in these 'Dubitationes theologicæ,' I have no means of determining. In his best-known work, the very admirable notes on St. Augustine's Enchiridion, he states with perfect acquiescence the ordinary doctrine.\* His 'Dubitationes' were published posthumously; they were for four years (and four years only) appended to Busembaum; after that period, the work was removed to make room for that interesting little treatise of Andreucci, from which I have already quoted.† The propositions maintained in his work are these two:—

(1.) Every act, which contains a real dolor and real propositum, is an act of perfect contrition and justifies extra sacramentum.

(2.) The attrition, requisite for Absolution, is 'contritio

\* "Diximus enim quòd motivum, ex metu æternæ pœnæ sensûs, *ita efficax* est in ritè attrito, ut eum determinet ad *universale odium* omnis peccati, et *universale propositum* ea in posterum fugiendi." P. 235, col. 1.

"Alter modus, sed per quem nos *non* explicamus attritionem cum sacramento sufficientem, est hujusmodi: 'timeo gehennam, et ideò abstineo ab iniquis externis operibus (sive aliquibus sive omnibus), cum voluntate internâ ita affectâ ut nullam habeat cupiditatem, etiam conditionatam si *liceret impunè*.' Hic modus . . . non habet illum *positivum amorem universalis justitiæ*, qui *requiritur in attritione sacramentali*." P. 233, col. 2.

† I derive this information from an adverse criticism on Faure's work, published in the "Mélanges Théologiques" for 1851, which has been shown me by a friend.

invincibiliter existimata.' If the penitent have sedulously laboured to procure real dolor and propositum, and without his own knowledge have failed, he will receive a valid and fruitful Absolution.

It follows from these propositions, or rather is the very same thing otherwise expressed, that if all Catholics were instructed in the true doctrines of the Church, no one would be fitly disposed for the sacrament, except those who should firmly believe themselves pardoned before they approach it!

His arguments for this extraordinary doctrine are derived (1) from the Council of Trent, and (2) from certain Tridentine, and ante-Tridentine, theologians. I will speak briefly (and only wish I had time to speak largely) on both these points.

As to his argument from Trent, consider this in the first place. He says expressly, that the attrition described by the Council does *not* include a real detestation of sin or propositum; yet he is wholly silent on the canon which *totidem verbis* declares the reverse.\* And consider this in

\* F. Faure's statement (dub. 4, sec. 6, prop. 1, coroll. 4): "Attritio, prout cœpit proponi a Valentia, Suarez, &c., nempe 'animi dolor ac *detestatio* de peccato commisso, cum *proposito* non peccandi de cætero, ex metu gehennæ,' *longissimè distat* ab attritione imperfectâ de quâ Tridentinum [loquitur]."

Conc. Trid. sess. 14, can. 5. "Si quis dixerit eam contritionem, quæ paratur per discussionem, collectionem et *detestationem* peccatorum, quâ quis recogitat annos suos . . . ponderando . . . æternæ damnationis incursum, cum *proposito* melioris vitæ, non esse verum et utilem dolorem . . . sed facere hominem hypocritam," &c. A. S. Now it is precisely of the "contritio imperfecta *quæ attritio dicitur*," that the Council has put forth this same denial. [Sancta Synodus] "declarat [attritionem illam] *non solum non facere hominem hypocritam*," &c. (Cap. 4.) It is of *attrition* then that the Church speaks, when she declares that it includes "*detestatio* peccatorum," and "*propositum melioris vitæ*."

I may also ask, how could even any heretic suppose that 'contritio existimata' would make a man hypocritical? That act, in regard to which Protestants made this allegation, was an act based on the fear of Hell as its motive.

the second place. The words of Trent, on which theologians always base their doctrine as to the efficacy required in attrition, are these: 'si voluntatem peccandi excludat.' See for instance the quotation from Suarez, in nn. 13 and 20, and the authors cited under p. 21. I have made several more references to the same effect; but they seem unnecessary. Nothing can be more clear (see the decree quoted in pp. 19, 20) than that the Council speaks of a certain attrition, quæ 'voluntatem peccandi *excludat*;' and says of *all* attrition (of this therefore inclusively) that it does not suffice for Absolution without the sacrament. Nothing on the other hand can be more clear, than that this is the very statement which F. Faure denies. One is really anxious to see F. Faure's own interpretation of these important words, 'si voluntatem peccandi excludat.' But one is anxious in vain; from the first line to the last of his little work, he does not ever so distantly allude to them.

When an author treats the decrees of the Church after such a fashion as this, he is not likely to be very accurate in his exposition of individual theologians. Faure admits indeed (as we shall presently see), that the whole body of post-Tridentine theologians is unanimously against him; which (standing in the very midst of their living tradition), he could hardly deny. He turns for support to certain ante-Tridentine and Tridentine writers.

As to the former, I admit of course readily, that on the doctrine of attrition, as on doctrines generally before the Church's definition, much unguarded expression may be found in this or that writer; many individual passages, which (if taken by themselves and not carefully compared with others) give a most mistaken impression, not only on the general tradition of the Church, but on the writer's own opinion. But if Faure means that on the whole the general teaching of theologians was more lenient before.

than after Trent, I can only say that Francolinus makes a statement directly opposite.

“Cùm primi illi paucique nascentis theologiæ scholasticæ professores declinâssent ad illud extremum, requirendi ad valorem et fructum sacramenti Pœnitentiæ contritionem, eamque perfectam et per se reconciliantem, ante Absolutionem sacerdotis, tantùm declarantis pœnitentem esse vivificatum;—*non fuit illicò ab omnibus qui secuti sunt totus ille error relictus*, sed *paulatim*: ita ut priùs cœperint aliqui docere prædictam contritionem non requiri ad *valorem* sacramenti; *postea* verò nec requiri ad *fructum*, requiri tamen *conatum* eam procurandi, adeòque requiri saltem *contritionem putatam*; donec *tandem* conventum est *nec istam* requiri.”\*

Francolinus, you see, declares that the whole progress of theology has been, by degrees, from a more severe to a less severe doctrine. And this statement of Francolinus's is the more remarkable, because in the Preface to that edition of Faure's work which I possess, Francolinus is very strangely made to stand sponsor for Faure's doctrine; which some one seems (very reasonably) to have suspected.† I could give at least fifty quotations from Francolinus, which would prove beyond question that he adheres to that doctrine of Suarez and the rest, which Faure ex professo opposes.

\* De dolore, lib. 2, c. 4, n. 4.

† “Ne qua tamen tibi suspicio *de falsâ ejus doctrinâ* ab aliquo injiciatur, scias nihil hîc fermè inveniri, quod non legatur etiam in ‘Clerico Romano’ et ‘Disciplinâ Pœnitentiæ’ Francolini.” That work of Francolinus, which I have, is not indeed one of these two; but it is posterior to them in date, and refers to them with agreement. He says, “cùm duos priores libros Apostolorum Principi dedicaverim, hos alios duos libros *haud dissimilis argumenti* dicare tibi debeo, O Doctor Gentium!”

P.S.—Since writing the above, I have obtained Francolinus's entire works. Everything which I have been able to see in them, most abundantly confirms the above statement.



I may mention one instance in particular (because it bears on our immediate subject), in which I have happened to observe the great misconception of a writer's meaning, into which these isolated quotations are apt to lead. Of all the quotations made by Faure, there is none which seems to present so lenient a view on the conditions of Absolution, as that from Scotus. He seems to speak (dub. 4, sec. 7), as though the mere absence at the moment of actual sin were sufficient. I must add however, in justice to Faure, that he himself guards us against supposing, that Scotus really means what his words seem to state. At all events, Francolinus fully admits that Scotus expresses the following opinion: — ‘Scotus Pœnitentiam *quæ sit in horâ mortis* dicit esse *plerumque falsam.*’ Lib. 1, c. 5, n. 11.\*

Faure also quotes four or five theologians, who were present at the Council of Trent. Now admitting for argument's sake (which I cannot admit otherwise, but have no space to consider), that he truly represents their opinions, I consider that nothing can be more fallacious than the use which he makes of those opinions. He says in each case — ‘This was written after the Tridentine decree had been passed. Hence Canus, or Vega, or Soto, did not consider such opinions contrary to that decree.’ Now nothing is more natural, than that theologians, even after a decree has been passed, shall continue to write with the same looseness and inaccuracy as before, until *their attention has been called* to the bearing which that decree has on such opinions. Now Faure does not attempt to adduce one single passage, in which these writers allude ever so distantly to the Tridentine decree on attrition. This omission, in a writer so learned

\* P.S. I find that in the ‘de Disciplinâ pœnitentiæ,’ Francolinus considers Scotus to hold, that for a man, dying after a life of sin, to elicit an act which justifies extra sacramentum is ‘*difficillimum*,’ to elicit one which shall suffice *with* the sacrament is ‘*difficile*.’ With this last opinion Francolinus concurs: lib. 3, c. 3, sec. 1, n. 23.

and so bent on proving his point, is quite conclusive. I infer confidently, that no such passage is to be found. On the other hand, he admits that Suarez and the other post-Tridentine theologians *did* build on that decree; he admits therefore, that every single theologian without exception, who considers that decree at all, considers it as wholly inconsistent with his (Faure's) doctrine.\*

It cannot therefore but add very great weight, to the argument which I have built on the Tridentine decree, that so very able and eminent a theologian as Faure presents a picture, one hardly knows whether more melancholy or ridiculous, in his monstrous attempts to escape from its force.

I should also add a word on a ground of authority, distinct both from the Council and from individual theologians. Every bishop of the Catholic Church instructs his priests in a certain doctrine on the nature of attrition, in order that this doctrine may be carried out in practise. Bishops teach this doctrine, by means of placing in the hands of students this or that approved work on moral theology. Now *all* such works, *without exception*, teach the proposition which Faure in terms denies; viz. that the requisite attrition must be 'summa, efficax, et universalis.' For four short years there was something like an exception; for though Busembaum himself teaches the recognised doctrine,

\* "Attritio prout cœpit proponi a Valentîâ, Suarez, Vasquez aliisque doctoribus Societatis Jesu, quibus assensere alii omnes attritionistæ ad nostra usque tempora." Dub. 4, sec. 6, prop. 1, cor. 4. All attritionists, all who hold that attrition suffices for Absolution, hold that *doctrine* on attrition which Faure regards as too strict. All *other* theologians of course are still further removed from his opinion. Again, "Si quis quærat ex me quid causæ fuerit, ut quàm plurimi recentiores hâc in re tam immaniter dissentiant ab antiquis, id satis ipsimet præ se ferunt . . . nempe sibi persuaserunt, ad essentiam sacramenti pertinere eam contritionem de *quâ Concilium Tridentinum . . . sic habet*," &c. Dub. 4, sec. 5. They all based their view, you see, on an express consideration of the Tridentine decree.

this worthless argument of Faure's found its way into Busembaum's company in the shape of an appendix. For four years, and four years only. It was then succeeded by a work proceeding on the acknowledged principles, and every bishop of the Catholic Church combines in authoritatively teaching those principles. The irresistible conclusion is, that these, and these only, are the principles of the Church.

My argument is indebted to Faure in one other particular, besides this his strange doctrinal exhibition. I can claim his authority for the following statements; in regard to which, however, I beg to observe, that they go far beyond anything which I hold.

He thinks that, even of recidivi, a *comparatively small* number elicit an act of attrition 'summa, efficax et universalis.'\* But how far more difficult must such an act be, to one who for years has been a reckless sinner, than to a recidivus!

He holds also that multitudes, even in the time of health and strength, may labour with reasonable sincerity at procuring this attrition, and may yet fail of doing so. I cannot agree with him in this: for if their labour be reasonably sedulous, it must surely be accompanied with earnest and hopeful prayer; and I am confident that God, in answer to such prayer, will infuse the desired act. (See p. 31.) But that Faure *does* hold the above proposition, is undeniable. He considers that no one can arrive at that disposition which is required for Absolution, without some not inconsiderable effort and trouble; so much so

\* "At quamvis hi consuetudinarii aut recidivi careant contritione justificante extra sacramentum," (he is speaking on the hypothesis of the ordinary doctrine being true,) "quis sine maximâ temeritate affirmet eos omnes etiam carere saltem *attritione* efficaci et universali? . . . Dixi 'omnes;' quòd enim *multi* hâc etiam attritione careant, libens concedo." Dub. 4. sec. 3.

indeed, as that he shall firmly *believe* himself to have arrived at that high disposition which justifies *extra sacramentum*.<sup>\*</sup> And he represents it throughout as the great recommendation of his doctrine, that on his view such great multitudes of *recidivi* are again and again validly absolved, who would otherwise be left uninterruptedly in habitual sin. He must think therefore, that all these multitudes have earnestly *laboured* to attain efficacious dolor, and yet have failed in this attempt.

Here then I close my consideration of F. Faure.

## SECTION 6.

*An act of sufficient detestation contrasted with various counterfeits.*

28. This contrast will bring the present chapter to an appropriate close, by putting into more definite shape the principles which I have established. The necessary act of detestation, it has appeared, must be incompatible with mortal sin. This proposition suffices to show, that acts of different kinds, which are sometimes unreflectingly mistaken for the requisite attrition, are in various degrees removed from it.

\* "*Obicem haberet*" (and so would *not* be absolved) "*quis ante sacramentum negligens esset in procurandâ sibi contritione, quæ sit dolor efficax et universalis.*" Dub. 4, sec. 7.

"*Debet limitari ad casum quo quis conetur ad contritionem, et ea attritio sit contritio saltem existimata.*" Dub. 4, sec. 6. prop. 1. coroll. 4.

"*Ii consuetudinarii aut recidivi non modò desiderant eum perfectum dolorem . . . sed plus aliquid faciunt et longè majus: nempe conati sunt et conatur ad illum consequendum, ita ut etiam sibi suadeant se eum dolorem esse assecutos.*" Dub. 4, sec. 4, sub finem.

&c. &c. &c.



29. Thus it is sometimes in popular conversation vaguely taken for granted, that the *sincere desire of pardon* is an act of attrition. Yet a most sincere desire for pardon is most undoubtedly, and most easily, compatible with the resolve of committing mortal sin : nay, I may add, we can hardly conceive the case of one who believes eternal punishment at all, committing mortal sin *without* a sincere desire of pardon. Since then the sincere desire of pardon is thus readily *compatible* with mortal sin, it never can itself be an act of repentance ; not even in cases, when no concomitant mortal sin *happens* to exist.

30. Another act, far more commonly mistaken by inaccurate thinkers for an act of attrition, is an act of fear ; ‘ I am most sincerely sorry for my past sins, because I see into how imminent a danger of Hell they have brought me.’ Let me call this act F (fear), and proceed to show how totally distinct it is from an act of sufficient attrition.

I refer (p. 12) to the ‘*slavish*’ act, the act of ‘timor serviliter servilis ;’ let me call it act S : “I would gladly repeat that sin now, were it not for my fear of Hell.” This, I need not say, is itself a mortal sin. Now these two acts, F and S, are the most natural company in the whole world. Act F, “I am heartily sorry for my sins, because I am in great danger of being damned for them ;” and act S, ‘If it were not for that danger, I would commit them again.’ Hence act F is *most easily compatible with mortal sin*. It cannot therefore in any case be a sufficient act of detestation ; not even in those cases, where it is not in *fact* accompanied by the slavish act.\* A man then who

\* This argument is very well expressed by Faure, in his notes on the Enchiridion. “Si hoc odium et propositum universalialia sunt, ex parte objecti extenduntur contra peccatum in *omni hypothesi* ; etiam illâ, in quâ peccato [non] constituta fuisset pœna ignis æterni : *nec possunt componi cum voluntate conditionatâ* ‘peccarem si impune possem,’ *quippe quæ voluntas et ipsa est peccatum.*” p. 235, col. 1. Ripalda, in controversy with

elicits merely this act F, is not even on his road to genuine attrition; he has not as yet got even the necessary *motive* into his thoughts. It is absolutely necessary that my grief for the past shall be of this kind: ‘I heartily detest my past sins, because they were contrary to that *abject interior submission* to God’s will, which is of peremptory obligation.’ My sense of this obligation may no doubt most legitimately be grounded, either totally or partially, on my firm belief in Hell; and in the consequent duty of labouring earnestly to avoid eternal torment. Still, I say, these two things are necessary: first, that the peremptory obligation of submitting to God’s will in all grave matters shall be proposed to my will; and secondly, that my will shall adhere to that bonum so proposed, with the requisite degree of efficacy.

31. And this brings me to the third counterfeit; on which I shall here say the less, because I have throughout been expressly opposing it. It is not enough, that the penitent shall view his past mortal sins with sincere *displacentia*, and with no other feeling; shall regard all possible future mortal sins with sincere *displacentia*, and with no other feeling; that there shall be no concomitant affection whatever to mortal sin. All this, I say, is not *enough*; because such *displacentia* must not only be *sincere*, must not only be *unaccompanied* by mortal sin, it must possess such great efficacy as to be *incompatible* with mortal sin. Nor again is it enough, that the penitent shall be ready to withdraw from all occasions of sin and adopt all prescribed remedies: these are often very strong *indications* of an efficacious *propositum*, but they are no infallible criterion.

Baius, draws out the same doctrine and reasoning very clearly. Francolinus again says that mere fear of Hell is insufficient for Absolution; that there must be a real sorrow for sin as *an offence against God*. “*Quamvis non abnegem debere peccatorem, ut reconcilietur cum Deo, dolere de peccato ut est offensæ Dei, non inde sequitur,*” &c. De dolore, l. 1, c. 6, n. 29. Valentia (quoted in p. 13) says this is *most certain*, and universally held.

(See p. 8.) It is required by God's law, (1) that the motive shall be universal; and (2) that the will shall tend to such universal motive, with that singular degree of efficacy which I have throughout maintained.

32. There is a doctrine on the extremely opposite side, which has been ascribed to me by more than one intelligent priest. I certainly never stated it, and cannot at all uphold it. It has been supposed then that, on my view, the *dolor*, as distinct from the *detestatio* which it includes, must be 'appretiativè summus.' (See p. 14, n. 3.) In other words, according to such a position, my will must recoil with most singular efficacy from the *present* evil of having formerly offended God; must recoil, I say, from this *present* evil with such great efficacy, that in virtue of my act I would now endure all possible sufferings, if by means of them I could undo the past. It is surprising indeed, how very indistinctly theologians in general speak of the *dolor* as distinct from the *detestation*; but I am quite confident that they never intend anything of this kind. It suffices here to say, that none of the theological arguments which I have used, or authorities which I have cited, would in any way bear out so monstrously rigorous a doctrine.

33. How far it is necessary, in order to the act's supernaturalness, that the bonum shall be known from *revelation*, and in no respect from reason,—this is a separate question which I have declined throughout. (See p. 6 ad initium.) Prescinding from this, the great essentials for Absolution are two: first, that the bonum proposed shall be universal; secondly, that my will shall adhere to that bonum with so signal a degree of efficacy, that, while such adhesion remains unrelaxed, mortal sin is physically impossible.

Let this be secured, and the rest most readily follows. If, while this act proceeds in my mind, I reflect on the sinfulness of my *past sins*, I elicit by physical necessity an

act of 'detestatio appretiativè summa' in regard to those sins; and (being in viâ), I also elicit an act of dolor, in that my will is affected towards the having committed them as towards a present evil. If, while the same fundamental act proceeds, I reflect on my *future conduct*, I elicit by physical necessity a 'propositum firmum, efficax, et universale' in regard to that future. The propositum is contained 'equivalently' in the attrition, and the attrition in the propositum. (See p. 5.)

One final explanation on a small matter. I assume throughout the opinion, which I myself follow, that the sacrament of Penance can never be valid and unfruitful. I have not thought it necessary to give my reasons for so thinking; because no part of my practical application is in the slightest degree affected by the question.



## CHAPTER II.

HOW FAR IS THERE REASON TO THINK, THAT SUCH AN ACT IS  
OFTEN ELICITED BY A RECKLESS SINNER, WHO SENDS FOR A  
PRIEST ON FEELING THE APPROACH OF DEATH?

34. In the preceding chapter I have been advocating a thesis, which I consider to be absolutely certain, and such as no Catholic is at liberty to reject. I need hardly say that the present question on the contrary is a perfectly open one. And I hold my own opinion upon it with less confidence than on the former; not only because it *is* an open question, but also because, in many portions of it, the true answer must be based on particular experience, from which I am in so great degree excluded. At the same time, I must confess myself surprised in no small degree, that any one can ponder on such an act as that described in the last chapter, and then say that it is *easy* for a reckless sinner to elicit it: unless indeed it be supposed, that such sinner is visited by most rare and extraordinary grace. Even in regard to recidivi, St. Alphonsus states, quite as a matter of course, that a real propositum is '*very difficult*.\* But if it be difficult to recidivi, to whom good motives are in various

\* "Hic ante omnia advertendum, rem valdè difficilem esse, quòd peccatores, frequenter ex consuetudine in mortalia labentes, cum vero proposito ad confessionem accedant." L. 6, n. 451, ad initium.

shapes familiar and frequently proposed, what must it be to reckless sinners, whom for years good thoughts have ceased to influence?

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### SECTION I.

*What class is meant under the name "reckless sinners"?*

35. I think I made a mistake in my Five Lectures, by calling the unhappy men, to whom my argument referred, 'obdurate' sinners. The word 'obdurate' has a technical sense in theology; and 'obduratio' is always supposed to be in company with 'excæcatio.' Now I never meant to imply that these poor men are commonly excæcati.

The class to which I refer consists of those, who have for years absented themselves from the sacraments, and have allowed themselves meanwhile on the whole to drift passively along the current of their various inclinations. I suppose that, during that period, there is hardly one restraint which they have imposed on their thoughts, from the motive of interior submission to God's will; and certainly that they have made no attempt whatever worthy the name, by means of prayer or otherwise, to curb their passions and bring them into subjection. After several years so spent, they feel the approach of death; and being greatly in fear of eternal torment, they send for a priest.

36. One friendly objector has mentioned, that many Catholics, who absent themselves from the sacraments, live a much better life than this. It is sufficient for the present to say, that I am not speaking directly of any class but that above described. It is impossible to treat directly of every

different class ; but the principles which may be evolved in the consideration of one case, cannot but throw much incidental light on other cases also. So far then as this or that man *approximates* to the above supposition, I would apply my remarks to him more or less *approximately*.

37. If we hold that these men will commonly elicit with ease an act of sufficient attrition, we must make one of two suppositions. We must either think that they will do so by means of co-operation with ordinary grace ;—or else that there is reason of one kind or another to expect, that they will be visited by singular and *extraordinary* grace. Let us consider in order these two suppositions.

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## SECTION II.

*Will an act of sufficient attrition be easily elicited by a reckless sinner, through the help of ordinary grace ?*

38. Let it be observed, I am not in the least denying, that a sufficient act of attrition is most fully within the moral power of the most desperate sinners, as such, when they feel death approach ; even though they be visited with no more than ordinary grace. I say, ‘as such ;’ so far, that is, as the extreme and inveterate character of their sinfulness might be supposed a reason for denying such moral possibility. Of course, where the soul loses strength, or self-possession, or even the use of its faculties,—such weakness or helplessness may *well* make an act of repentance morally impossible ; just as in the case of those unhappy men, who may lose their reason while in a state of mortal sin. But I say, the most detestable wickedness will never alone

cause such moral impossibility. The very worst sinner has full moral power to the end of so far corresponding with his ordinary grace, as that he shall turn to God sincerely, earnestly entreat Him to infuse real repentance, and labour with real and hearty effort towards the same result. Whoever does so act, will infallibly obtain repentance in answer to such prayer; and thus have due dispositions for the sacrament. See this more fully stated, pp. 31, 32.

I am not at all denying then, that this is morally possible; and that from time to time, in some rare instances, it takes place. I only maintain that it is extremely difficult. I consider this question from p. 36 to p. 39; and to the remarks there made, I add the following.

The will of fallen man is in itself far more powerfully attracted to temporal than to eternal goods; and in the case of these men, this corrupt natural bias has been indefinitely increased by inveterate habit. The main current of their life has for years consisted, for the most part, of a passive surrender to every enjoyment, however forbidden by God's law. So far as they have *not* so surrendered themselves, it has been commonly either from motives of *pride* or of *human respect*; they have been unwilling to degrade themselves in *their own eyes* or before *others*. These three motives then—self-indulgence, pride, vain-glory,—have absolutely ravaged their soul. As these great rivals of God have increased in influence, God Himself has diminished; every year they have become more ready to offend Him, and for a less temptation. In order however to their eliciting an act of sufficient attrition, it is necessary that this motive, which for years has held the lowest place of all, shall reign *paramountly and supremely*. It is necessary that they shall submit themselves to this long-neglected authority, with the most abject and unreserved submission; with such entire prostration of will in fact, that (while the



act of submission remains unchanged) every possible solicitation of their old motives—self-indulgence, pride, vain-glory—every possible soliciting pleasure or threatening pain,—shall be destitute of the physical power to draw them into an act of grave disobedience.

I really find it difficult to understand the state of mind in which a man can be, who should deny that this is a *difficult* task; nay, who should say that it is merely one of ordinary difficulty. It is not merely that the will, from long habits of sin, is so very feebly moved to a good motive: though this would be a great deal. But in addition to this, from long disuse the very motive itself has become most *strange and unfamiliar*. By consequence, the mere *preliminary* task of obtaining access for it into their thoughts, in any such definite shape as can be the basis of an efficacious act, must in general be one arduous in the extreme.\*

\* Francolinus, most lenient as he ever is, admits this fully. [*“Scoti rationes probant attritionem*] *haberi difficile* in morte, ab iis qui usque ad illud tempus malè vixerunt. . . Quia quamvis facillimè concipiatur timor gehennæ jam propinquæ, non ità facile concipitur spes veniæ et *propositum non peccandi amplius si vita supersit*: non solum *renitente longo habitu contrario*, sed ipsâ vi morbi ingentique mortis timore *non permittente benè expendere*, quæ tunc expendenda sunt ad concipiendam bonam spem bonumque propositum.” De disciplinâ pœnitentiæ, l. 3, c. 3, sec. 1, n. 23.

Bourdaloue urges the same general argument more at length—“I say that an impenitent life leads the sinners of this world to *false repentance* at the time of death *by way of delusion*; and there is no one, I believe, but takes my meaning clearly. I shall explain it, however, and I say that the sinner, *unaccustomed as he is to the exercise of penance*, and having never practised it during the course of life, is *unskilled in the nature of it*. Whence I conclude that *he is deceived at his death*, and that by a natural consequence he mistakes an *imperfect and defective sorrow* for true repentance. How should he judge rightly of what he never understood? And if he cannot judge rightly, how will he be able to avoid mistakes, especially in a matter so delicate as this, a matter in which the *most secret and internal motions of the soul must be nicely discerned*? If this unfortunate man in the course of life had made any acts of repentance, he would *by little and little have formed some idea of it*, and by dint of application

39. It has been said indeed, that the mere desire of the sacrament warrants a considerable presumption of the requisite disposition. But I can hardly imagine a statement more unfounded; and certainly, if unfounded, more mischievous and fatal. At a later period of my argument, I shall consider the case of those, who desire the sacrament *without* knowing that they are close upon death; and I shall willingly admit, that in many cases this fact *does* afford a most consoling presumption. But there is the widest possible difference between that case and the one before us. Suppose that a sinner, in the midst of health and strength, desires justification; he desires that, which he knows he cannot retain except by a constant and active struggle against his evil nature. In ordinary cases therefore, there is great probability that his will is really tending, and perhaps powerfully, to that bonum honestum, the preferableness of God's service over all antagonistic objects. But here there is no kind of presumption in the least parallel; on the contrary there is every reason to think, that he desires justification *simply as his means of avoiding Hell*. There is a great presumption no doubt, that he is eliciting a real act F (see n. 30, p. 119); a real sorrow for his past sins, because of the danger of Hell into which they have brought him. But I have shown (in the number referred to) that, by such an act as this, he is not even *on his road* to genuine attrition; to a real preference of the service of God over all

would have learned to distinguish between *efficacious and inefficacious sorrow* for sin. But he never made trial of it; and he is now on the point of breathing out his last without use or experience. Is it then surprising that the enemy imposes on him? that his own sense misleads him? that he takes the figure for truth and the shadow for the body? Is it surprising that he fancies his *desires of salvation* to be *saving effects*, and the inspirations of Heaven to be acts of contrition? Is it surprising that, prepossessed by so fatal an error, penitent as he is to all appearance, in reality 'he dies in his sin'?"—Translation of Bourdaloue's Sermons by Rev. A. Carroll, S. J. p. 449.

incompatible things.\* And theologians here give a pointed concurrence. Thus (in p. 66, note) I have quoted a passage

\* Hear Bourdaloue again. “‘A *forced repentance* :’ I am bold enough to defy the most presumptuous sinner not to agree to this. For where is the liberty, when the heart is moved by no spring but that either of servile fear or of inevitable necessity? Can it be said to be a free renunciation of sin, when we only renounce it *because we are no longer in a capacity to commit it*? Can it be said to be a free submission to God, when we only submit to Him because we crouch under the sword of His justice, and are incapable of defence? Can it be said to be a free separation from the world, when we only separate from it *because it is no longer in our power to enjoy it*? Nevertheless, repentance, to be efficacious and true, must be voluntary and free; and if it be not, though it were as lively and feeling as that of Esau, which, according to the scripture, made him ‘roar out with a loud voice,’—Gen. xxvii.; it is the repentance of a *cast-away, of a sinner doomed to eternal destruction*. Hence *the fathers are unanimous in decrying a death-bed repentance*, in terms sufficient not only to fill the sinner with consternation, but to drive him to despair. Hence the Church, being authorised to judge in such cases, had so little reliance theretofore on repentance of this nature, that, without absolutely rejecting them, for fear of setting bounds to the mercy of God, she exerted her discipline to the utmost rigour with regard to such penitents, in order to convince us *how much she suspected the sincerity of their repentance*. Hence, according to the ancient canons, cited in the councils, those who neglected to ask for baptism till the end of their days, were not acknowledged, it seems, to be Christians, but with reserve, inasmuch that they were accounted to have incurred irregularity; and for this St. Cyprian gives the following reason: they were looked upon as men who served God by constraint, and only gave themselves to Him because they could not help it. And truly, says St. Augustine, whoever condemns the irregularities of his life merely because reduced to the necessity of quitting it, shows but too plainly that his condemning them proceeds *not from good will, but from mere necessity*.

“‘A natural and quite human repentance;’ that is, a repentance which had neither God nor sin for its object. For, adds St. Augustine, what are these supposed penitents afraid of? Are they afraid of losing God, of displeasing God, of incurring the unpropitious regard of God? No, my brethren, answers this holy doctor, nothing of all that: and the proof is evident, because so long as they had nothing beside to fear, they entertained not a thought of their conversion to Him: they are *afraid of burning, but not of sinning*. Now it hence appears that *their repentance is ineffectual*, because they are not instigated either by the grace of God, or by the spirit of God, but by self-love. To repent in this manner it is fully sufficient, without loving God, to love one’s self. But to repent like a Christian, to recover the grace and favour of God, it is not sufficient to love one’s self. We therefore may die in the exercise of repentance, and

from Layman, to the effect, that if a dying man does not aim at *contrition*, it is very improbable he will elicit *attrition*. Now of all approved theologians, Layman is among the most lenient; but what is still more remarkable is, that even Escobar, who is a very proverb for laxity, makes the same remark.\*

40. I have heard this argument: ‘If such great numbers are converted by a public mission, why may they not also be converted at the approach of death, when so far stronger a motive intervenes?’ I answer very readily. First and most importantly, the mere fact that men come freely, during the period of life and health, to a long succession of sermons, shows a very real (though perhaps at the outset feeble) attachment of the will to God’s service. The very same remark here applies, as that which I just made on those, who approach *the sacrament of Penance* while death is still regarded as distant. And I ask, secondly, even if the case were otherwise, what opportunity is there to carry dying men through a long series of affecting and influential meditations?

It is alleged indeed, that the fear of Hell will act very powerfully in stirring them up to the difficult task: but on this a word must be said. Some priests have declared to me, that it is *rare* to find this motive acting very powerfully at the last, and have objected to my lectures as implying die in our sin, because sin is not destroyed by every repentance; and if any repentance is unable to destroy it, it is that which we are speaking of. This made St. Gregory Pope conclude that *more sinners perished in the Christian religion by false repentance than by utter impenitence*, and consequently, that the prediction of our Blessed Lord comprises more than we are generally aware of, when He says in clear terms, that ‘we shall die in our sin.’ P. 448.

\* “Profectò, quia moraliter de attritione certus esse non potest peccator, ideò regulariter existimàrim eum *obligatum esse contritionem procurare*, ut saltem attritionem attingat. Etenim si *in eo periculo constitutus*, solà attritionis diligentia contentus sit, timere planè potest nec *attritionem sufficientem habiturum*.” Theol. Moral. lib. 13, n. 147.



ing the contrary. I argue therefore thus: either the fear of Hell does, or does not, act powerfully in any individual case. If it does not, the argument built on it falls to the ground. But if it does, then I say (see pp. 37, 38), "panic fear, instead of helping, quite singularly impedes us; impedes us, I say, in providing against that very danger which causes the fear." Conceive a man (see n. 38, p. 127) to whom the requisite motive is quite strange and unfamiliar; and imagine him labouring to apprehend it rightly, under the practical impression that he will be eternally lost if he fail to do so. Can any one imagine a more unpromising condition, for so momentous an intellectual enterprise?

41. These circumstances are common to all cases. But now consider various circumstances, not universal indeed, but such that there must be comparatively few cases in which one or other of them is not found.

(1.) 'The dying man is prostrated by weakness or distracted by violent pain.' (p. 37.) I wish my readers would take advantage of the next violent illness they may have; and experimentalise on themselves, as to the nature of those spiritual acts which they will then be able to elicit.

(2.) He is pressed with worldly cares; with grief at leaving so many objects of his affection; with anxiety in regard to their future temporal well-being.

(3.) He is lying in a hospital; or placed under other circumstances, in which the priest is almost precluded from urging on him powerfully the appropriate motives.

(4.) He has all his life been under the practical impression, that no very great trouble need be given to the eliciting of interior acts; that religion consists mainly in a series of external observances, and of vocal prayers punctually recited by the lips; and that if he listens with attention and docility to all which the priest says, he has done his part. In vain will the priest, at this his last hour, seek to

eradicate so deep and rooted an impression. How many of our poor are such, there seems great variety of opinion among priests ; but that some are such, is admitted by all.

(5 ) Nay, the priest himself perhaps does not think, that any very great effort is requisite on the dying man's part ; and so takes no pains in exciting him to such effort. That there is a certain number of priests who so think, is certain from the comments made by several on my five lectures. I hope they will allow me to say, with very great and sincere personal respect, that I most deeply grieve they hold this opinion ; and on no other ground so much, as on the irretrievable injury which (I fear) must in some cases accrue to dying sinners, where the priest (however excellent) takes such a view of the case.

How many are there, among the class of whom I speak, to whom one or other of these circumstances does not apply ? and what is the probability that in any such case the requisite act will be obtained ?

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### SECTION 3.

*Is there any reason for expecting, that singular and extraordinary grace will be commonly given to such dying sinners ?*

42. Is there any reason to expect this, merely because they wish to approach the sacrament ? In other words, is there any kind of promise made by God, that into those who seek the sacrament of Penance, the supernatural act shall be infused, without which the sacrament of Penance does not exist ?

I have spoken on this in p. 47-8 ; I will add a remark somewhat differing in kind. No question can be imagined,

on which it must be more easy than on this to discover the Church's teaching. Two acts are required on the penitent's part, as matter of the sacrament; contrition and confession: \* nor has any one ever professed, that God gives infallible grace for one of these rather than the other. The Church then either teaches, that the mere intention of approaching the sacrament will draw upon us a grace *infallibly securing these acts*; or else she teaches the opposite, viz. that we must ourselves labour (by prayer and other means) duly to perform these acts, in order that the sacrament may exist. Can there be a possible question *which* is her teaching? Are our people taught, *e. g.*, in regard to the *integrity of confession*, 'there is no need of care on your part, nor of careful interrogation on the priest's part, in order for this; the very wish for the sacrament will draw down grace *ensuring integrity of confession*'? They are taught of course precisely the reverse; and indeed experience alone would amply suffice to refute any other doctrine. Precisely the same therefore must hold in regard to attrition. There is no more promise that a grace will be given me infusing *attrition*, than that a grace will be given me securing *integrity of confession*.†

43. And it is well to observe by the way, that—although

\* For I need not speak on the penitent's acceptance of the enjoined penance.

† Amort, a theologian who is particularly averse from extreme statements, and seems to have derived a genuine spirit of moderation from the great Benedict XIV. under whose eyes he wrote, does not hesitate to say: "Timendum est ne *innumerae* confessiones, propter defectum propositi, sint *infructuosae*." De Pœnitentiâ, disp. 3, quær. 27.

Marinus quotes Gobat, than whom no approved theologian is more lenient, to the same effect; adding his own concurrence: "Gobat notat plures confessiones sacrilegas esse *ex defectu veri propositi* quàm ex defectu integritatis: quod *mihi certissimum est*. Et ita tenet P. Alph, Rodriguez, *cum pluribus aliis*." Tract 22, disp. 7, n. 105.

Colet, who is extremely rigorous, goes the length of saying, "It is certain that out of one hundred invalid confessions, ninety-nine are void from defect of contrition."—Migne's *Cursus*, vol. xxii. p. 377, n. 732.

See also B. Leonard of Port Maurice, Fromond, and Ferreri's Catechism, quoted in p. 62, on the great frequency of insufficient propositum.

priests may undoubtedly do most important service, in proposing persuasively the suitable motives for repentance,—yet their power is quite immeasurably less in helping a penitent to attrition, than in helping him to an integral confession. In the latter case, he has but to answer sincerely ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to the various interrogatories which are made. But in the former case, he has to elicit by his own will an interior act, of most high and elevated character; an act which, unless singular grace be supposed, must be admitted (see n. 38, p. 126, 127) to be, in the case of a desperate sinner, arduous in the extreme.

There is no need however for saying more against this imaginary supposition, that the mere wish of receiving the sacrament will ensure due dispositions; as I have not heard of any exception being taken to my remarks on it in the Five Lectures.

44. If then this supposition be wholly unfounded, is there any other ground for expecting that these sinners will receive such extraordinary favour? I am not at all denying that, in this or that individual case, God *does* lavish at the last most singular graces; and under the next section I shall consider the question more particularly. But I now ask, is there any ground for expecting this as a *general rule*?

If any one maintained that there *is* such a ground, he must maintain no less than this; that there is some kind of promise, that *the gift of perseverance* will be commonly granted to those unhappy men of whom we are speaking. Now the Council of Trent anathematises any one who shall say, that the gift of perseverance can be obtained except by means of a certain ‘*speciale auxilium*.’ (Sess. 6, can. 22.) Do we wish to know how such auxilium may be securely obtained? The Council exhorts us to ‘fear and trembling, watchings, alms-deeds, prayer, fastings and chastity’ (see p. 40). Yet such an opponent as I am supposing would have to affirm, that men are practically sure of obtaining this gift, *though*



*living in sin till the very moment when death approaches, so only they can see a priest at the last.*

I am glad however to say that such an opponent is (I believe) an imaginary being. I have argued this part of the question at length, from the Church's decisions, from Scripture, and from Tradition (pp. 40-50): nor have I heard of any objection being made to any part of my argument.

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#### SECTION IV.

##### *The question of experience considered.*

45. No *possible* experience can throw discredit on that pious hope and conjecture which we may entertain, that God at the very last may show some singular mercy, both to Catholics and Protestants, both to Christians and Heathens (see pp. 50-53). Evidently not; for such interposition may well take place, at a time and in a manner wholly removed from the *cognisance* of experience. The present question does not concern *pious conjecture*, but any grounded or confident anticipation.

It is most conceivable then, undoubtedly, that though God *have* made no kind of general promise, yet the *experienced facts* of death-beds should testify, to dying sinners being then commonly visited with most singular and extraordinary grace. I say this is quite *conceivable*, undoubtedly; but I have not heard of any facts which give the least support to any such supposition. I repeat that I am far from denying there *are* such cases; I am but saying, I have seen no ground at all for thinking them *frequent*, far less of counting them as *the general rule*.

46. In p. 35 I described a sluggish and otiose semblance of repentance, as not uncommon at the last. I formed my impression of this, from what I had heard priests say; but there were other grounds also for thinking it not uncommon. Thus Ferreri's Catechism (p. 63), than which there is no more authoritative and recognised work, describes it as *very common*, even among those who frequent the sacraments through their life, to take no pains for exciting in themselves the due dispositions.\* Cornelius à Lapide says (pp. 56, 57), that *many* dying men are ignorant that an efficacious propositum is required, and what is meant by it; while *many* again, though they do know it, take no pains to acquire it. Layman speaks in a most similar tone, (p. 66, note); while Billuart quotes 'the holy fathers and all theologians' as agreeing that death-bed repentance is 'most rare and most difficult' (p. 46). Bourdaloue again quotes St. Gregory the Great (as we have seen), to the effect that "more sinners perish by false repentance than by utter impenitence." Nor will any one maintain, that human nature has altered since these writers so expressed themselves. If then, in times and places where it was possible to expend so much care on Christian education, these facts were nevertheless true, it seemed obvious to make an inference of the following kind. Far *more*, I infer, are such facts likely to be true, under *our* circumstances: among whom the disproportion between the number of priests and of their flock is so enormous; and where our people labour under the terrible disadvantage of living in a Protestant country.

I must admit however, that some priests consider this not a fair picture. Against which fact I place the following statement; and must leave the final decision with those,

\* "I penitenti in gran numero," so act,—according to Ferreri.

who have far more opportunity than I can have of knowing directly the facts of the case. One priest to whom I sent my lectures, before he had heard there was any controversy on the subject, had written in pencil opposite to the paragraph these words: 'Very true!' Another priest assures me, that in his experience the picture I drew in that paragraph is *the* one which, ordinarily and as a rule, offers itself, in dying sinners who send for a priest. A third priest, whom very few equal in the amount of his experience among the London poor, said that undoubtedly in his experience this is far the more common case with these unhappy men. It will show how carefully the latter weighed his words, when I add that he made one exception to his agreement. I had said (p. 35) the dying man "does not dream of rousing himself to any vigorous effort of the will; much less does he practically feel," &c. On which this priest remarked, that God only of course could tell what passed in the penitent's mind; but that certainly in the common run of such cases, the dying man presents no *external appearance* of any such process going through his mind.

On the other hand, those who deny that they have met with such cases, ordinarily admit that, if they did meet with them, they would be very far from hopeful as to the poor men's eternal doom.

47. Other priests have made a statement to me of the following kind. They say that undoubtedly those whom they visit on a death-bed, and who have been long absent from the sacraments—that these men are commonly at starting very listless, and seem to care extremely little for interior repentance. Nay, some of these priests say, considerable numbers remain in this state to the last. Yet considerable numbers also exhibit quite a different phenomenon. There is many a dying man, they tell me, who, if the crucifix be held

before him, if God's mercy on the one hand, and the great eternal truths of judgment on the other, be powerfully set forth, will soon dissolve in tears and show every sign of emotion.

Now of course this is a far more favourable state than that of listlessness; nor would any one presume to say, what the Holy Ghost may really be doing in the soul of any individual. Yet, taking such cases as a class, I can see no reason for regarding them with anything approaching to a confident hope. Of what character are these men? Their emotions are unusually lively, and their power of sympathy unusually quick. But this is the very class of men, in whom the emotions wonderfully outrun the will. An illustration of this is obvious from ordinary human matters. Take a man of somewhat genial temperament, but of rootedly selfish habits: there is no more common case than this. Such a man hears some touching tale of woe; and he is deeply affected, (perhaps melts into tears,) just as he would if he read such a tale in some novel or saw it represented on the stage. His emotions are very lively, no doubt; but *how far does his will share in that liveliness?* It is the most ordinary remark in the whole world, that this same man is not disposed to give up a single enjoyment which he really prizes, in behalf of that very case which has thus powerfully excited his emotion. A practised philanthropist comes in at the same time, and hears the same story. His *emotions* are but little excited, for he has been familiar with a hundred such cases: but his act of *will* is such, as will lead him into a course of active labour in behalf of that distress. In other words, the act of will ordinarily depends for its efficacy, immensely more on the degree of *habit*, than on the degree of *emotion*.

And now to apply this parallel. The Catholics, of whom I speak, are far enough in general from being selfish,



as towards *each other* ; but as towards *God*, their conduct has ever been eminently selfish. By hypothesis they have been for years quite without the habit of going through any course of labour, or denying themselves any gratification, for the sake of obeying Him who has created them ; for the sake of requiting Him who has shed for them the last drop of His Blood. This being so, when religious truths are interestingly put before them, the very novelty and freshness, with which long disuse has invested the subject, exercises a powerful effect on their emotions. Moreover they give the freest course to such emotions, because they see that this is the result which the priest desires to obtain from them. But I ask, how far is their *will* moved in sympathy ? For years they have been unused to all sustained self-denial for God's sake : what possible ground have we for hoping, that they are now eliciting an act possessed of the needed efficacy ?—an act such, that if God were to fix and stereotype it in their mind, every requisite labour and self-denial would be encountered, every soliciting pleasure repelled, rather than that one mortal sin should be again committed ?

I am not at all doubting, that here and there God (in great and rare mercy) infuses such an act. Still less am I doubting, that even under the presence of ordinary grace, the dying man has the fullest moral power (by means of prayer and serious effort) to rise into such an act. But as to the act being *common* among such men when they do *not* put forth this serious effort, I am altogether incredulous. Take those who are living on the whole a life of consistent obedience : but who can look back upon a period of a most opposite character ; upon a period, when temptation invariably overcame their infirm will. I am quite sure their testimony will frequently be, that religious thoughts filled them with far more of passionate emotion in the latter

period than in the former; in the period of recurring sin than of steady virtue. I do not say with more of abiding sweetness and tenderness—very far indeed from it; but with far more of passionate, though short-lived, emotion. And they can see also with the greatest clearness, on looking back from their present vantage-ground, that even during the periods of such emotion, their acts of will were weak and inefficacious in the extreme.\*

48. Are there no symptoms then imaginable, which would warrant a very favourable inference as to the dying man's dispositions? There are many such symptoms; and most priests, it would appear, have from time to time fallen in with such, even in cases where the life has been most desperately wicked. Suppose the dying man shows himself quite penetrated with the enormity of his past sins; that he utterly repudiates all such extenuations, as that he really *had not the power* to avoid them; that on the contrary he mentions with great explicitness, in his confession or otherwise, the special circumstances which render them the more heinous. Suppose he is really desirous of further life and suffering, that he may make some amends to God; and accepts his present pains (not merely with a

\* So Bourdaloue, "You will weep, but you will not be converted; you will sigh and moan in the presence of God, but you will not be converted; you will lift your hands up to Heaven, you will stretch forth your arms and embrace the crucifix, the moving image of your dying Saviour, but you will not be converted. And why? Because, notwithstanding this specious outside and seeming grief, you retain *your obduracy and a heart of stone*; nor can I here refrain from making application of David's words: 'Out of the midst of rocks thou shalt send forth voices,' Ps. ciii. You will deceive, undesignedly, those who shall see you and those who shall hear you. You will deceive the priest, who will piously suppose that his care and attendance are well bestowed. *You will deceive yourself, but you will not deceive God*; and in quitting this world, you will find, to your great disappointment and astonishment, not a God of mercy, but a God of justice. Seek the God of mercy all your life long: you will find Him at your death, and enjoy Him in glory to all eternity." P. 450.

certain calmness and patience which often spring from natural causes) but with joyful eagerness as some kind of penance. Suppose he shows himself extremely anxious, about those whom he has led astray by evil example; and is earnest in devising means to reclaim them. Suppose he has the opportunity of exhibiting virtues, most opposed to the sins which have formerly predominated; suppose, *e. g.* he has been remarkable for personal or national pride, and now receives with patience some stinging insult offered to himself or his country. Such a catalogue of favourable symptoms might be indefinitely increased. I am not supposing indeed, that he merely *responds to the priest's suggestions* on these various heads; such a fact would be worth very little: I am supposing that they are the natural and spontaneous production of his own mind. All, I think, must agree, that such phænomena as these would be most consoling indications of that real and deep *change of heart*, on which practical writers insist; or in other words, they would be indications that the indispensable act of deep, inward, unreserved, efficacious submission to the Almighty's Will, has in fact been elicited. How far such phænomena are *frequently* to be observed in those who have sinned recklessly to the end, it is for others and not for me to determine.

49. There is one other fact relevant to the subject, which experience seems so very generally to testify, that it should not be omitted. It is this; that those reckless sinners, who send for a priest at the approach of death, almost universally, if they recover health, relapse into sin as a matter of course, and without any kind of resistance. I do not mean that those who have exhibited such phænomena as were described in the last number,—that these usually relapse: but that the great mass of 'death-bed penitents' do so. One can hardly imagine a more significant fact. It is very incredible doubtless, that a reckless sinner

can without great effort (unless most rare and singular grace be supposed) elicit so very efficacious an act as is required. But it is even far *more* incredible, that he can have elicited an act so pointedly contrasted with his whole past life,—and then that *this act shall have passed away as imperceptibly as it came*, leaving no trace behind it. I have already mentioned, how great is the consensus of moral theologians, in declaring that relapse throws great suspicion on the sufficiency of a past disposition. (See n. 16, p. 91.) St. Alphonsus goes the extreme length of saying, that one single relapse into the same sin without amendment, even after a considerable interval of time, affords so great a suspicion of the penitent being insufficiently disposed, that he cannot be absolved except on displaying extraordinary signs of grief.\* I must frankly confess, with very great deference to the Saint's authority, that this decision seems to me most rigorous, and allowing far less than truth would warrant for the will's mutability. But so strong a statement, from one who so little bears the general character of rigour as St. Alphonsus, is the most cogent testimony how strong is the opinion of theologians on this subject.

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## SECTION V.

### *The testimony of theologians and practical teachers.*

50. I will not add anything under this head to the quotations found in the Five Lectures: see note to p. 34; note to p.

\* "Quidam doctores admittunt recidivum solis signis ordinariis absolvi posse usque *ad tertiam et quartam vicem*; sed huic opinioni nunquam potui acquiescere, dum habituatus, qui post unam confessionem recidit sine emendatione jam est verus recidivus, et fundatam præbet suspicionem suæ indispositionis." Praxis Confessarii, n. 71.



46, 47; note to p. 54; p. 56-66. I will not add to these quotations, though I have met with several others, first, because (as I stated in my Introduction) I have no leisure for doing justice to new matter; and secondly, because I may possibly do the same thing far more fully hereafter. For I am not without hope, that by the kindness of a friend I may be able to bring together a whole catena of passages, from the works of those theologians and teachers, who by common consent rank most highly in the Church; a catena, which will set forth in the clearest light, how immense is the preponderance of authority on the side which I advocate.

In the present section then, I will only consider such objections as have been made against the relevancy of my former citations. These objections are two. First, I understand that Father Faber's note, cited by me in p. 62 from p. 323 of his work, was never intended to state that the writers there quoted are all on the severe side; and that the case is otherwise. I must therefore of course retract the citation; though I think my mistake was not unnatural, from the phrase '*in the most alarming way*,' used by the author to express the tendency of those writers.

51. As to the second objection made, I cannot admit its justice; but must defend my own original allegation. I was speaking of the very strong statement, that the great majority of adult Catholics, 'perhaps almost all,' are saved; and I said (p. 61), that for this view I could not find a single authority stated, except perhaps Lacordaire's. It is replied that Suarez holds this very doctrine. I maintain quite confidently, that he does not: he holds, I admit, that the *majority* of adult Catholics will probably be saved; but I cannot see any allusion to the '*great majority*,' still less, to the 'perhaps almost all.' I will begin by copying out in full the passage referred to. De Prædest. lib. 6, cap. 3, n. 6.

“Res quidem dubia est. Mihi autem videtur distinctione utendum. Possumus etiam Christianorum nomine intelligere omnes illos, qui nomine Christi gloriantur, profitenturque se in illum credere; cùm tamen inter eos multi sint hæretici, et apostatæ, ac schismatici: et loquendo in hâc generalitate, probabile mihi est majorem esse numerum reproborum; et hoc modo intelligo omnia, quæ in secundâ opinione afferuntur. Confirmarique potest, quia hæretici et apostatæ semper fuerunt in magno numero; qui *adjuncto numero impiorum fidelium malè morientium*, planè excedit numerum sanctè morientium. At si per Christianos intelligamus solos illos, qui intra Ecclesiam Catholicam moriuntur, verisimilius mihi est *plures illorum salvari*, in lege gratiæ. Ratio est, quia imprimis ex his, qui moriuntur ante adultam ætatem, *maxima multitudo decedit cum Baptismo*: ex adultis verò, licèt *major pars hominum sæpiùs mortaliter peccet*, tamen sæpiùs resurgunt, et ità cadendo et resurgendo vitam transigunt. Tandem verò in fine *pauci sunt*, qui per sacramenta non præparentur ad mortem, et de peccatis doleant saltem per attritionem: hoc autem sufficit, ut in eo tempore justificentur. Et postquàm justificantur, facilè solent illo parvo tempore perseverare sine novo peccato mortali. Ergo pensatis omnibus, verisimile est *plures ex his Christianis salvari*.”

The controversy, it will be seen, turns on the sense in which he uses the word ‘pauci’ in the last sentence but one. My opponents say, he means by it ‘few out of adult Catholics;’ I maintain that he means by it ‘few out of those Catholics, who pass their life in falling and rising again:’ and on this question we are to join issue. I bring forward four arguments.

(1.) On my view the argument precisely bears out the conclusion built upon it; on my opponent’s view it would bear out quite a different and far wider conclusion. Suarez has clearly stated his conclusion, that the majority of adult

Catholics are saved: (plures ex his Christianis salvati.) His argument (if admitted) *precisely leads* to this conclusion. 'The majority of adult Catholics pass their life in falling and rising again.' 'Few *out of these* fail at the last to receive pardon.' 'Hence it still remains true, that the majority of adult Catholics are saved.' But on my opponent's view, as he himself is even forward to urge, quite a different conclusion would follow; viz. that there are but few of adult Catholics who are *not* saved. Surely it is quite incredible, that so accurate a reasoner as Suarez should thus mis-state his own conclusion.

(2.) On my opponent's view, the very sentence which Suarez adduces as his 'reason,' is not only no part of his reason, but is introduced without any purpose at all. 'Ratio est' he says; the *reason* of my conclusion is, that the majority of adult Catholics spend their lives in falling and rising again. If in the very next sentence he went on to say, that there were few *even among reckless and desperate sinners* who do not repent at the last, this first 'ratio' is simply unmeaning; simply mal-à-propos; and introduced (it is not too much to say) in the most inept and silly way possible.

(3.) Then the words 'tandem verò'—'the majority of Catholics are ever rising and falling again; and *then finally* ('tandem verò') they close this kind of life by eliciting genuine attrition.' On the other view 'tandem verò' must mean, 'then as a last argument:' but this will I think appear to all, on consideration, a most forced, unnatural, and violent construction; and the more so, because (as I have already said), on this interpretation of Suarez's words, the argument in question would *not* be 'the last,' but the *only* argument.

(4.) Then surely, in the first words which I have

marked in Italics, the ‘*numerus impiorum fidelium malè morientium*,’ is spoken of as very far from inconsiderable.

I have no doubt at all then, that Suarez’s meaning is as I have said; and Recupitus,\* when summing up authorities, does not so much as imagine the possibility of its being different. How far I am able to follow Suarez, in thinking that probably there are few lost out of those who pass their life in falling and rising again, is a question which does not here concern us: for our whole argument refers to a different class altogether. I fear there is no doubt on the matter of fact, that here in *England* the number of adult Catholics who so live, does not nearly amount to the *majority*.

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## SECTION VI.

### *On the à priori argument derived from God’s mercy.*

52. Some Catholics seem to lay great stress, in one shape or another, on certain à priori arguments. For instance: ‘*can it be believed* that God will allow this man to be ‘*finally lost*, when He has bestowed on him the great ‘*mercy of being visited by a priest at the last?* It is not ‘*every one to whom God grants this mercy; He is here ‘then showing special favour.*’ Or again: ‘*Think how the ‘Saints in Heaven—think how our Blessed Lady—is praying ‘for this soul; can we believe that God will be deaf to their ‘prayers?*’

\* “*Probatur tertio ex Suariorum; quia major pars fidelium cadendo et resurgendo vitam transigit. Hi autem, cum ante mortem communiter præparentur per sacramenta ad quæ sufficit attritio,—videtur probabiliter ex vi illorum salvari.*” De Numero prædestinatorum, n. 4, sub finem.



It is evident, on a moment's reflection, that this kind of reasoning (if consistently adopted) would lead to the most sweeping conclusions. Take the case of a man who commits mortal sin, and is not struck dead at once in the very act. Why may I not argue thus? '*Can it be believed*, that God will allow this man to be finally lost, 'when He has bestowed on him the inestimable mercy of 'having time for repentance? It is not every one to whom 'God grants this mercy; He is here then manifesting quite 'a special favour;' and, 'Think how the Saints in Heaven 'are praying for him,' &c. &c. Nay, why may I not press it to much wider inferences? 'Our Blessed Lord died for all 'mankind. *Can I believe* that God will allow any one soul, 'thus tenderly loved, to be plunged in everlasting torment? 'And think how all the Saints pray for each redeemed soul.' Nay, in appearance still more unanswerably—'How great 'is the love which the Creator must feel for the work of His 'own hands! Is it not almost blasphemy to believe, that He 'will allow one of them to perish? Do those who so think 'consider that God is wanting in mercy? or that He is 'wanting in power? Take even a merciful *man*, he would '*if he could* save all mankind: and God most certainly *can*. 'Is God less merciful than a merciful *man*?' &c. &c.

It would carry me a great deal too far, if I thought of seriously entering on that question (both theologically and philosophically so momentously important), which this mode of argument at once suggests. I may merely here observe, that mortal sin is unquestionably a very far greater evil than eternal punishment. Let any one then explain to me how it is, that notwithstanding His unutterable love for man, notwithstanding the constant and earnest prayers of Mary Most Holy, and all Saints, God still allows this fearful evil of mortal sin. Let any one explain this to me, and I will undertake to solve for him the present difficulty

with equal clearness ; nay, I will undertake to explain how the same attributes of God would remain in all their perfection, even though He had permitted every human being, who *has* committed mortal sin, to undergo its condign punishment.

53. But I may make a practical remark, which is not without importance. I have referred in my Five Lectures (p. 48) to the argument which some have thus attempted to build, on the special favour displayed by God in permitting the poor sinner to see a priest. To what I there said, I add a further observation from a different point of view. For it seems to me, that those who thus reason do really, though without at all intending it, requite God's mercies in a spirit so perverse and ungrateful, as to call for the most earnest remonstrance.

Take the case which I just mentioned. Suppose I have committed mortal sin, and am allowed by God's great mercy a *prolongation of life*. How am I addressed by a pious priest on the occasion ? " Oh, be grateful to God for His unmerited mercy, and show your gratitude by putting that mercy to the purpose for which it was given. He has given you time for repentance ; occupy yourself then *with* repentance ; renounce sin ; cleave to God." But I reply : ' No : since ' God has shown me this mercy, I am quite sure He will ' show me more. He has killed many in the very act of sin ; ' since He has not so acted to me, I am sure He intends to ' save me : so I shall take no trouble about the matter.' Can words adequately describe the frantic perversity of such an answer ? What insanity in regard to my own welfare ! What loathsome and disgusting ingratitude to my loving Benefactor !

Now are not the cases precisely parallel ? I have spent my life in unresisted sin, and yet at the end God gives me the great benefit of a priest's attendance. The priest says

to me—"For the sake of Him who has given you this last opportunity, make use of it. You have a great work to do, for you have put off all to the end: yet He is abundantly powerful to perform in you that great work; if you will but earnestly supplicate His aid, and put forth serious efforts in correspondence with His superabounding grace." (see p.31.) 'No,' I reply; 'since God has given me the priest, *I am sure He will give me the disposition*: it is a plain proof that He 'intends to save me.' Is there any one man whose salvation we should regard as less probable, than his who could be capable of such a speech? Yet, suppose any one gives a dying man to understand, that the mere presence of a priest is the almost unfailing pledge of salvation, because it indicates a merciful intention on God's part;—what does such an adviser do, except solicit that dying man to the precise frame of mind, which we have just seen to be so odious and intolerable?

## CHAPTER III.

## OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

## OBJECTION I.

*‘It is impossible for the priest in practise to act on such a doctrine.’*

54. I cannot admit that this is an objection, which I am fairly called upon to answer. I have argued from the decisions of the Church, from theological reasons, from the consent of theologians, that a certain singular degree of efficacy is required, in that act which shall suffice for Absolution. If any exception can be taken against my arguments, this is most legitimate: but if it cannot, surely it is the business of practical men themselves, and not my business, to adjust their practise with sound doctrine. To explain how practise may be adapted to sound doctrine, is not the duty of one who argues on a point of doctrine, but of those who argue on the *application* of such doctrine to the cases which actually occur.

In one particular indeed, I have myself argued on such application; and so far no doubt I *am* called on to answer the objection. The particular to which I allude, is of course the greater or less probability, that Absolution, given to dying men of such or such a class, is ordinarily valid. But



on this subject no one has ever professed the least *practical* difficulty. The universal rule is, “in extremis extrema sunt tentanda;” the words of Absolution should always be pronounced, wherever it is not *absolutely certain* that the dying man is *indisposed*. There is indeed one most important practical conclusion, on which the greatest writers lay very great stress; and which I have ventured to urge with all the energy and importunity in my power. I mean this. That the priest shall by no means take for granted that the dying man is duly disposed, merely because he has himself sent for a priest; but on the contrary, shall use his utmost efforts to excite him towards that vigorous and efficacious interior act of repentance, which is so very difficult on the one hand, and so indispensably necessary on the other. (See pp. 31–2.)

55. I will not however shrink from expressing my opinion on the more general question: though here, as in other matters where practical experience is so important an element, I put forth such opinion with that deference and diffidence, which are eminently called for. The difficulty proposed I understand to be this. If the doctrine be as I have stated it, and if it be so difficult for the priest, (nay even for the penitent himself,) to know for certain where there is a sufficient disposition, what rule can reasonably be adopted by the confessor? what rule, I mean, as to the cases where he shall, and where he shall not, pronounce the words of Absolution? I reply—I am most strongly inclined to think, that no rule which he can possibly adopt will be free from *the very gravest* evils, unless the penitent be *fully instructed* in true doctrine on the subject; but, that where such instruction exists, the practical difficulty is not very great. If this be true, it is of the utmost moment that all our children shall be duly instructed on this subject when at school; and that those adults who

present themselves for Absolution, and who may appear to the priest not to have been so instructed, should have the truth then and there sufficiently explained.

To fix more definitely our ideas—the doctrines to which I refer as so important to be known by all penitents, are such as these. (1.) No one can obtain the benefit of Absolution, unless he have been brought into such a disposition of mind, that he would rather die than commit again any of his past mortal sins could the occasion recur; that he would rather die than commit any possible sin for the future.\* (2.) Let any one have given himself with reasonable industry, for a certain (not very long) period of time, to due preparation; to a careful consideration, with real effort and labour, of those motives on which the act of repentance is to be based; and let him have accompanied such effort and labour with earnest and hopeful prayer to God for the due disposition; such a man will certainly obtain it in answer to such prayer. (3.) Those who have *not* so exerted themselves, have no reason whatever to suppose that they have obtained the necessary dispositions; but on the contrary every reason for thinking it probable they have not. (4.) It is absolutely *impossible for the priest to know* how far the penitents have taken due pains to acquire such disposition; he may very possibly therefore pronounce the words of Absolution, in cases where the disposition does not exist.† In all such cases however, no benefit whatever is obtained by his pronouncing those words; but the indisposed ‘penitent’ remains still a child of sin and a slave of the Devil.

All our books of moral theology take for granted, that such doctrines as these have been carefully instilled into the

\* Scientifically: “Unless he have elicited an *act in virtue of which* he would rather die,” &c.—See pp. 4, 5.

† See the quotations in note to p. 133.

mind of Catholics; and if this be done, the practical rules given by *the most lenient* of moral theologians may (as it seems to me) be acted upon without any evil effect resulting. Perhaps the penitent refuses to adopt the prescribed remedies:—or perhaps he has relapsed into sin, with such complete absence of resistance, as to throw grave suspicion on the genuineness of his past repentance; while at the same time he brings with him no extraordinary signs of compunction:—in either of these cases the words of Absolution would not be pronounced. Supposing the case otherwise, the priest having ascertained that the penitent fully understands the Catholic doctrine on the subject (or otherwise having then and there in sufficient detail instructed him), asks him, whether he confidently believes he has real grief for the past and real resolve for the future. Whenever the answer is affirmative and given with every appearance of perfect sincerity, I should have thought the words of Absolution ought to follow as a matter of course. Indeed I do not see how it is possible to acquire greater certainty in tali materiâ.\*

At the same time, and as all admit, it is in the highest degree desirable, that the priest should add a few words, proposing the appropriate motives with so much impressiveness and unction, as may help to elevate the penitent into a still more efficacious act. Francolinus makes this remark: “*Felicem in hoc esse solere operam fervidi prudentisque confessarii, eâque verè converti ac conteri peccatores qui non satîs*

\* “Quando pœnitentes apparent *probabiliter* dispositi, nec apparet motivum in oppositum, tunc habetur de sufficienti dispositione *moralis certitudo*, si minùs objectiva et absoluta, certè *subjectiva et respectiva*: id est *quantùm hic et nunc sufficit* ad ritè absolutionem impendendam, eò quòd esset *moraliter impossibile* assequi majorem illam et majorem certitudinem quæ *physicè* posset haberi.” Viva in 1m prop. Innoc. XI. n. 23. “Vix unquam haberi potest *certitudo* de dispositione pœnitentis.” S. Alph. de sacramentis in genere, n. 57. See also S. Alph. de Pœn. n. 461; and Gury, vol. ii. n. 471.

dispositi accedunt, ostendi supra *ex communi theologorum sententiâ, sanctorumque virorum doctrinâ*. Quod permovere debet confessarios, ut in hoc labori non parcant; sed aliquid semper dicant *ad cor pœnitentis ferendum*.” De Pœnitentiæ disciplinâ.\*

I need hardly add that I have been speaking of the priest exclusively in his capacity of judge; and not entering at all into his duties as ‘medicus.’

56. A remark which I just now incidentally made, should be brought into more prominence. The rules and counsels to be found in books on moral theology, all proceed (I think) on the supposition, that our people are fully instructed in the Catholic doctrine on this subject. So far as this supposition may be in accordance with the facts, it is (in my humble judgment) the most lenient theologians, who will be generally a priest’s safest guide. I will bring this consideration then to bear on a subject, which I briefly noticed in my Five Lectures—(p. 33) “How far does the mere voluntarily coming to confession imply a sufficient disposition?” I think nothing can be more reasonable and solid than St. Alphonsus’s treatment of this subject (de Pœn. n. 460), on the above supposition. But if we imagine the case of Catholics *not* duly instructed, then I cannot but hold confidently that important qualifications must be made. Even on this hypothesis, ‘*ultronea confessio*’ in a man who has no knowledge that his death is approaching (see n. 39, p. 128), indicates a great deal. It indicates that he has a sincere desire to make his peace with God; much more than this, it indicates that he really seeks that state of justification, which he must know that it is impossible for him to retain, except by a constant warfare against his evil nature. But I think also notwithstanding, that there is a very serious

\* I wrote out this passage, as I looked through the work (see P.S. in note to p. 114), and have been unable to recover the reference.



danger lest he come without sufficient disposition, from his very insufficient knowledge what that disposition is, which is indispensably necessary.

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## OBJECTION II.

*‘It would be very mischievous to act on such a doctrine.’*

57. This objection may be stated in two different ways, which I will successively consider. First it may be alleged, ‘Even granting the statement to be true, that these sinners would ordinarily experience great difficulty in eliciting the necessary act, it is very mischievous to dwell much on such a statement.’ Let me proceed to consider the reasons given for this allegation.

58. First it is said, that such a reflection would greatly lessen a priest’s readiness to attend the dying. I reply (1st) that this allegation is unfounded against me: and (2nd) that a parallel allegation may with great justice be retorted on my opponents.

Suppose that in any particular case a priest happened to know, that the dying man, who sends for him, has long absented himself from the sacraments. First, it by no means follows that he has been simply a reckless sinner. (See n. 36, p. 124.) Many, it appears, are long absent from the sacraments, who yet have been far from neglecting all endeavours to regulate their interior, to curb their passions, to submit their will to God. So far as this may be the case, it is in that degree the less improbable, that either God may give the poor sinner unusual and most lively grace; or again that he may himself so energetically correspond with God’s or-

dinary solicitations, as to gain fresh and constantly increasing supplies. For such men, I need not say, the presence of a pious and intelligent priest is inestimably important.

But again, even among the most reckless sinners, there are instances in which God does give extraordinary grace at the last. And there may here and there be instances also, where the dying man has so far corresponded, or is so far prepared to correspond, with his existing grace, that the presence of such a priest may readily so fan the flame as to enkindle due dispositions. Lastly, other dying men may elicit acts of *attrition*; which, in default of the sacrament, will not suffice for salvation. It is impossible for the priest even to guess, that the particular case to which at the moment he is summoned, may not be one of these. I reply then (1), he is under the direct obligation of attending such cases, under penalty of mortal sin; and (2) there is always so much possibility, that on his presence or absence has depended a fellow-creature's eternal destiny, that the reflection of having been culpably neglectful on one such occasion would be for life perfectly insupportable. No priest of the most ordinary conscientiousness could resist such motives; and if an utterly unprincipled priest were supposed (I imagine, in these kingdoms at least, quite a non-existent case), the strongest motives possible would solicit him in vain.

But there is a most dangerous evil to be dreaded on the *opposite* side; an evil which, from the very fact of its being so subtle, is the more likely to have the most extensive, nay, the most disastrous and withering influence. To educate the young in such real and vital apprehension of Christian truth, that it may practically influence their whole life,—is among the most difficult tasks which can be imposed on a priest. In like manner, when they grow up and are immersed in the duties and occupations of their various callings, the inducing them to live in the presence of God,

to make His will the rule of their life, to seek their rest and satisfaction in the thought of Him and His love—the really aiming at *this*, requires an exertion of the priest's highest energies, spiritual, intellectual, physical. Let it be understood, however, that the eternal destiny of souls (who can say of how many souls?) depends on the alternative, whether he do or do not apply himself to this task,—you give him a motive sufficient, to nerve him for the struggle, and bear him safely against all difficulty. But let this fearful doctrine (which God forbid!) once gain general acceptance, that the mere presence of a priest at the hour of death is sure to make everything straight and square at the last, what will be the infallible result? Education of the young, it will be thought, may without imminent peril be neglected; urgent and detailed enforcement of the Gospel upon adults may without imminent peril be neglected; what then will remain? Very many priests will not aim, with any very great effort or perseverance, at more than this; viz., that the reverence paid to priests be not so utterly blotted out from the people's mind, but that at all events they will certainly *send for a priest when they feel themselves dying*. Let this be secured, and (on this view) all will be secured which is absolutely essential.

59. The second reason given for the allegation, that my statement is mischievous in its results, is the effect which it is likely to have on a dying man. 'Let him be told that a difficult work is before him, you drive him to despair.' I reply—that there are two states of mind conceivable in a dying man. He may (1) be so oppressed with the thought of his past sins and the supposed impossibility of repentance, as to be in serious danger of despair; or (2) he may be under the practical impression, that as he has providentially caught his priest, he is sure of salvation. If the former be the case, I willingly admit that no mistake

would be more frightfully disastrous, than to speak on the difficulty of repentance. He is only too much impressed with that difficulty already; the priest's great duty is to make him feel how abundantly *possible* it is with the grace of God. I have drawn out (bottom of p. 31 and p. 32) such motives as would seem to me most suitable for the occasion; and the whole context of the passage will show how completely alive I was to the danger of despair. But if the *second* case be the one in hand, certainly I do not see how a priest can be *too* urgent in his admonitions, as to the *difficulty* of that act which is absolutely requisite for a valid Absolution. How can you possibly persuade a man to make a great effort—an effort too very unusual to him in kind—unless you make him understand that it is absolutely necessary?

60. So much for the effect on a dying man. As to those who are not dying, it stands to reason that no single statement can be more important for *their* welfare, than inmost earnest and urgent dissuasion against those insane hopes of a death-bed repentance, which in the case of bad Catholics are the Devil's chief snare. It is very certain that great labour and effort are necessary to avoid *sin*. If once people ever came to fancy, that *no* great labour and effort are necessary to *repent* of sin, it would follow as an inevitable inference, that far the easiest way of going to Heaven (and hardly less sure than any other) would be, that they drink to the very dregs the cup of sinful pleasure; and then, when death comes near, and they have exhausted all which the world can give them, that they easily and (as it were) yawningly send for a priest, and become reconciled to God. So clear is this, that very many even of those who think death-bed repentance easy, think it also very important that such a doctrine should not be *preached*. On so very obvious a matter then I need say no more.



61. I am now to consider the second shape which this general objection may wear. It may be alleged then, that the injurious consequences, which would result if my statement were believed, constitute in themselves a strong presumption that the statement is *not true*. I think little more is necessary to refute this, beyond repeating what I have just said. If the *opposite* statement to mine, consistently carried out, would make priests less energetic and anxiously sedulous in educating the young and in placing Christian motives vividly before the adult—if it would tend to make men regardless of God when in their hours of health and strength, and very confident (notwithstanding) of salvation when in their hour of death—if it would lead them to regard their salvation as dependent, rather on the accidental presence of a priest at the last, than on the earnest prayers for sanctity and perseverance which they may have put forth through their life—if all this be the legitimate result of that opinion which is *opposed* to mine, the last thing which can be truly said in disparagement of *mine*, is that its results are practically evil.

62. I must not here forget, that I have another (though much smaller) class of opponents. There are those who say, not simply that my statement on the great difficulty of a death-bed repentance is mistaken, but that that very doctrine of attrition, on which I ground it, is mistaken also. I cannot feel any certainty that I rightly apprehend what that doctrine is, which these adversaries advocate in opposition to mine. But if I do rightly apprehend it, I maintain confidently that it is positively contradictory to the Church's teaching: though at the same time I need hardly say, how totally contrary to their intention is such opposition, if it really exists. I have defended my allegation in the first chapter, on grounds of theological argument and on grounds of theological authority: I am here to consider the practical

consequences, to which such a doctrine must consistently lead.

And I cannot begin my argument, without expressing my deep conviction that no priests in England are more unwearied and laborious than these opponents of mine; and that few are more careful and punctilious than they, in putting into execution those rules which are laid down by moral theologians. My very argument turns on this: for I earnestly entreat them to consider, how their practise, consistent as it is with itself, can by possibility be made consistent with the doctrine which they advocate—supposing always (which is very doubtful) that I rightly apprehend their doctrine.

I may remind my readers of the points at issue. The Church teaches, as I most firmly maintain, that in order for Absolution, it is requisite that (whether we turn our thoughts to the past or the future) we prefer the service of God simply and absolutely over all possible antagonistic objects. ‘No,’ replies my principal opponent, as I understand him, ‘only over those objects so far as the intellect happens at the moment to represent them.’ ‘This qualification,’ he adds, ‘is always implied in the statements made by theologians.’ I address him then as follows.

Here is a man who has been inveterately addicted to sin of a certain definite character. At this moment, from mere satiety, his usual gratifications present themselves to his mind in the most dull and unattractive shape. Over them, as so represented, he gives a languid and listless preference to the service of God. He presents himself before your tribunal; and at once as a good priest, you proceed to interrogate him thus. “Are you firmly resolved to avoid in future those foul offences? Will you promise me to avoid this definite occasion, to adopt this definite remedy?” Of course he totally declines, and you dismiss him unab-

solved. You would feel yourself unworthy of your faculties, if in any case you acted otherwise. (See pp. 8, 9.)

Now I ask, how can you defend your conduct, according to the doctrine which I understand you to advocate? Here was a man fully fitted for Absolution; for he preferred the service of God to all antagonistic objects, so far as his intellect represented them. You may answer perhaps, that he was not considering the future at all; and that a real *displacentia*, to be elicited towards *future* mortal sin, is held by you as necessary. But I rejoin, even if this were so, nothing would be easier than to *direct his thoughts* to the future, in a most vague and indefinite way; and this is all which your theory requires. He is either then disposed for Absolution when he comes, or might with the very greatest ease be made so. Instead of doing this however, you not only refuse him that Absolution, for which he is either qualified or might so easily become qualified, but are to him the proximate occasion of mortal sin. You remind him of many severe privations, which he would have to go through in serving God, but which were wholly absent from his thoughts. As a matter of course he failed under the picture which you drew, and elicited that mortally sinful act; "rather than go through such privations I will resume my sinful habits." This may be often inevitable, *according to the ordinary doctrine*, because you cannot form any probable judgment on the penitent's disposition, *unless* you thus test the efficacy of his propositum. But *you* cannot consider such a procedure as in the least serviceable for any such purpose. On the contrary, according to *your* doctrine, the *more* vague and indetermined are the thoughts which he gives to future or past antagonistic bona, *so much the more probable* is a sufficient disposition; because so much the more uninfluentially are such antagonistic bona represented by his intellect.

A precisely similar argument may be carried out on the subject of relapse, as I have shown in the first chapter. If your 'penitent' has invariably relapsed without struggle on the first approach of temptation, you regard him as insufficiently disposed. How can this be defended on your doctrine? See this argument stated in n. 16, pp. 91, 92.

One opponent has answered (though my principal opponent, I think, would altogether repudiate such an argument) that the priest is perhaps required by theologians thus to act, exclusively in his capacity of 'medicus.' I reply first, this is somewhat strong doctrine, that a number of men, who are perfectly fitted for Absolution, or may with the greatest ease be made so, instead of receiving it, are to be placed by the priest in the proximate occasion of mortal sin. Nay that he is called upon thus to act, why? that he may thus discharge his duties as spiritual physician! A strange medicine for souls indeed! And I reply, secondly, such an answer would put in a still stronger light the utter irreconcilableness of that doctrine which I oppose, with all theological statements; for every single theological work regards such men as *indisposed*, as wanting precisely in 'efficacy' of propositum.

63. Let me now draw out in some few particulars, the effect which would be produced on Catholic morality, by this doctrine faithfully applied. Catholics then would be taught, that a life of sin is efficaciously retracted, by a languid and listless preference given to God's service in the moments of satiety:—that repentance, in any such interval of satiety, is the easiest thing in the whole world; such as may be easily elicited with a yawn as one is stepping into bed:—that the repetition of the same sin, under the very same circumstances, without the thought of a struggle, quite easily and as a matter of course *alternates* with such genuine repentance:—that if in one of these matter-of-course inter-



vals I go to a priest, he is at once ready with his Absolution which shall make me a son of God and heir of Heaven. In fact, whenever the representation of antagonistic bona may happen to be faint, the difficulty would be *not* to repent. I must say, I don't see how any of the more ordinary charges which Protestants bring against the Confessional, and against our morality in connection with it,—how these could be treated as *calumnious*, if *this* were consistent with Catholic doctrine.

Let it be remembered, that my chief opponent himself admits that (according to his doctrine) every act, however faint and languid, which is directed to an universal supernatural motive, is a sufficient disposition, *when not actually accompanied by mortal sin* (see p. 105); that there *can* be no mere act Z where act Y is absent. (See next section.) Let this be remembered, and see if in one single particular I have over-coloured the picture. For myself I confidently maintain that a still further inference results from his doctrine: (see p. 110) I maintain that, according to him, *every single supernatural act*, which is not actually accompanied by mortal sin, suffices for Absolution. But it is not necessary to press *this* inference to its very fearful practical applications.

To proceed however. The doctrine, which I am repelling, would not even have the result of securing frequent approach to the Confessional; though if the Confessional were such as it would be on the above supposition, I could not regard that as an evil. For consider: what could be easier, than in a listless way to think about God's holiness, and put forth a vague wish of conforming ourselves to His Will *because* of such holiness? If the antagonistic bona be at the moment very faintly represented, this act will most easily amount to a *preference* over them *as* so represented. And then, without my going near a priest,

habitual grace re-enters my soul ; and if I so died I should go to Heaven ; because I have elicited a true act of ‘*amor super omnia.*’

I will glance at one further consideration, which it would carry me too far to pursue. If *this* be an act of ‘*amor super omnia,*’ how very easy also will become an act of ‘*fides super omnia.*’ It will soon follow, that almost all Protestants have real theological faith ; and then *their* salvation also will become most easy, on the same low conditions which suffice for Catholics in the statement just concluded.

Surely it is unnecessary to follow into further details the foul and disgusting picture. I will add therefore but two remarks. (1.) It cannot be said that I am speaking too strongly against an opinion tolerated by the Church ; for my very allegation is, that this opinion is *not* tolerated by the Church, but is in direct contravention of her teaching. Indeed, considering all the consequences to which it must legitimately lead, its frightful proximity to simple Antinomianism, I cannot but consider it to be as far removed from the Church’s pure and holy doctrine, as Hell is removed from Heaven. (2.) I am sure I need not repeat, that never even in my dreams (as they say) did the *possibility* occur to me, that my opponents would accept such consequences as true. If they continue to hold their opinion, they will argue very strongly against the *legitimacy* of such consequences as I have thence deduced. They would not of course regard with less horror than myself, such an exhibition of Christian morality as I have attempted to describe.

When however they set themselves to do this,—to argue against the legitimacy of those consequences which I have deduced, I would beg of them to consider that there are but two alternatives possible. Nothing is more universally admitted than this, viz. that it is necessary and sufficient, in

order for Absolution, to elicit an act of the will, which on due motives shall give a preference to God's service, whether as regards past or future, over all possible antagonistic objects. There are then but two alternatives open; there is no middle position whatever. Either theologians mean, 'over all possible antagonistic objects purely and simply,' as I maintain;—or 'over all such objects merely *so far as the intellect at the moment represents them*,' which they maintain.

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### OBJECTION III.

*'Acts W and Z tend to the proposed bonum in a way intrinsically different.'*

64. As I have no further mention to make of my chief opponent, I will here argue with him on one final subject. It often happens, that two rivers, whose courses most widely diverge, if you contemplate them very near the source, give no promise at all of such extreme separation. And so my opponent's controversy with myself may be traced back ultimately to one quasi-philosophical difference, which might appear to be of a merely speculative character. Since however it is perhaps of too technical and recondite a nature to interest readers in general, I will warn them off the ground in this as in a former instance; I will beg them not to trouble themselves with reading this section, unless they are prepared for much dry matter and some sustained exercise of thought.

65. Reverting to my original argument connected with acts Y, Z, and W (see n. 13, p. 82), my opponent *denies* that act W *can* be equivalent to act Z: 'for,' says he,

‘act W is a *direct* act, while act Z is but *hypothetical*: consequently act W is a real *will*, but act Z cannot be ‘called more than a *wish*.’ I will reply to this statement, 1st on grounds of reason, and 2ndly on grounds of authority. I should not omit however to observe, that this argument does not purport to answer my reasoning on the essential nature of a real resolve and a real repentance (see n. 14, p. 83), but only on the equivalence of acts W and Z.

66. I must fully admit, that there are very many cases in which the will tends to a hypothetical bonum. An obvious illustration (I hope it may not be considered too familiar) would be of this kind. A poor man, in sickness or undergoing a surgical operation, is offered (what in his hours of health he most rarely obtains) a full meal. He says to himself, “how I should like this if it could be offered to me when I am well.” The bonum, to which his act of will tends, is *hypothetical*; viz. the pleasure which such meal *would* impart if procurable under certain circumstances. A corresponding case of bonum *honestum* would be, if I drew a picture of some imaginary and improbable state of things, and considered the course of conduct which would be virtuous *under* that state of things. It may most easily happen, that such a course would *not* be virtuous at all, but vicious, *except* under these imaginary circumstances; my will however *now* aims, with greater or less efficacy (as the case may be), at the *hypothetical* bonum *honestum*, thus presented by the intellect.

But I altogether deny that the will ever does, or by possibility can, *tend hypothetically* to a proposed bonum: in every case it must tend *directly*. Let me illustrate Y and Z by a concrete case. Being in a famished condition, I am bribed by the soupers in Ireland to abandon the external profession of my faith; though doing so with great unwillingness. Here act Y is, “I resolve to abandon such



external profession, for the pleasure of that food and clothing which these rascals offer me;" and act Z, "I am most unwilling to do so, because of the intrinsic obligation of obeying my Creator." My opponent maintains, that in this latter act the will tends *hypothetically* to that bonum honestum, 'the intrinsic obligation,' &c. I maintain confidently, that it tends *directly* to that bonum; and that the only defect, which exists in the act, is the absence of sufficient *efficacy*. This is precisely the point at issue; and I really cannot help thinking that my statement is obvious on the very surface. I bring forward however two arguments in support of it.

(1.) As I observe in p. 2, act Z again and again issues in positive practical action. In the above case, at the very moment when I am resolving to give up the external profession of my religion, I abstain from all unnecessary acts of insult or contumely towards it. I abstain on Fridays, I defend the priest from some attack, simply in virtue of act Z; in virtue of that act of my will which tends 'inefficaciously' (see n. 18, p. 95), to the intrinsic obligation above named. If a *hypothetical* act of the will *could be conceived at all*, at least most assuredly it could not issue in *positive practical action*. If there were any distinction *at all* between a will and a wish, it must be that *the latter never leads to actual results*: but act Z is *continually* leading to practical results, even while act Y remains. If act W then is a *will* as distinct from a *wish*, act Z is the same; and it still remains true, that W and Z are precisely equivalent.

But a moment's thought will show, that this attempted distinction between a wish and a will, is utterly without foundation. No one can sincerely *wish* for any bonum, who would not (in virtue of that wish) go through *some* exertion, however slight, (were occasion to offer) in order to reach it.

The only imaginable difference is in the *degree* of such exertion; or in other words, the *degree of intrinsic efficacy* which the will's act possesses. I supposed, at starting, W and Z to possess *equal* efficacy; and have now amply proved that such a supposition is most admissible.

I think that nothing can add to the decisiveness of this reasoning; yet I will proceed further to a second argument.

(2). Suppose a good priest seeks to reclaim me from committing any more of these sins Y: what is his course? he works upon act Z, and endeavours to *increase its efficacy till it shall expel Y*. He in no way seeks to *change the form* of Z; or work in it *any single change* of any kind, *except this one*: viz. increase of *efficacy*. That very bonum honestum, which is already influencing my act Z, will be urged by my kind friend more and more powerfully, with every variety of appeal, in order that it may *more vividly* impress my intellect, and through such impression *more powerfully* influence my will. He will labour, I say, to increase the *efficacy* of act Z; but no single *other* particular will he seek to change, in its mode of tending to the proposed bonum. Hence in its present state its *one defect is a defect of efficacy*; no *other* particular, in its mode of tending to the proposed bonum, is defective at all. If the priest succeeds, and if in the *final* shape which act Z assumes it is a *direct* act (as my opponent admits it is), then in its *starting* shape it is a direct act also: for *no other change* whatever has been wrought in it, except *increase of efficacy*. The objection therefore falls to the ground.

67. I have now then superabundantly shown that W and Z are precisely equivalent. My original argument therefore remains untouched: Z is confessedly no sufficient disposition for the sacrament, neither therefore is W such. In other words, no act suffices for the sacrament, unless it possess

such singular efficacy, that the co-existence with it of a mortal sin is physically impossible. So much on grounds of reason.

68. For the grounds of authority on which I rest, I am now able to appeal to a considerable assemblage of such grounds: and it is on this account, that I have deferred my answer to this later part of my Appendix. It follows from my opponent's statement, as he himself earnestly maintains, that any act suffices for Absolution, which gives the preference to God's service over all antagonistic bona, *only so far as the intellect at the moment apprehends them*. I have shown (nn. 16, 62, pp. 90-92, 159-164), how contrary this is to the language of theologians; and how directly fatal to all the most important rules, unanimously laid down in the books for the treatment of penitents. It follows also, as he himself *also* admits, that there can be no *mere* velleity or inefficacious act, directed to the avoidance of mortal sin, unless mortal sin be *actually found in its company*; in other words, that every act, directed to an universal supernatural motive and not *actually accompanied* by mortal sin, is an act of attrition. This too I have shown (n. 26, pp. 104-110) to be in direct contradiction with the language of theologians. It is impossible that there can be theological arguments of a stronger character than these.

69. He asks me, how far theologians have directly treated the precise psychological question which he raises. Of course, from the nature of the case, since they are writing on theology and this subject belongs to philosophy, we must expect to find the doctrine which I maintain, very far oftener assumed and implied, than directly stated. And I may confidently appeal to all, who are in any way familiar with the post-Tridentine scholastics whether it is *not* universally implied on every relevant occasion: whether it be not implied, I say, that every act of the will tends *directly*, and

cannot by possibility tend *hypothetically*, to the bonum proposed. I would confidently appeal to them, whether act W would not be, quite as a matter of course, recognised by these scholastics as equivalent to act Z. To find any great number of passages where this is explicitly stated, would require more research than I have now time for giving. But there is one passage, among those which I have already collected, which (viewed in its context) does speak very explicitly. It shall here follow. It is from Lugo de Incarn. disp. 25, nn. 15, 16. It will be seen that Lugo here draws the very distinction, which I adopted above, between a *hypothetical bonum* and a *hypothetical mode of tending* to a bonum: the former possible, and indeed frequent; the latter impossible and inconceivable.

“Ego in primis existimo cum communi sententiâ, dari in voluntate actus elicitos tendentes in objectum suum sub conditione: non quidem ita ut ipsi actus habeant suum esse sub conditione (*hoc enim repugnat in ipsis terminis*) sed ut *amplectantur objectum, non absolutè, sed sub conditione aliquâ*. Quod quidem latius probare, pertinet ad 1, 2; et colligi videtur ex actibus intellectûs, per quos certum est, quòd aliquando assentimur objecto, non absolutè sed sub conditione; v. g. si Petrus currit, movetur. Ergo licèt actus voluntatis sit actus elicitus, poterit tamen ferri in bonum, non absolutè, sed *sub conditione sine quâ non est bonum*; sicut illud aliud objectum non est verum absolutè, sed sub conditione. In quo differunt intellectus et voluntas à sensibus externis, qui non possunt ferri in sua objecta sub conditione, sicut nec possunt ferri in illa abstractivè, sed solùm intuitivè; at verò intellectus et voluntas, sicut ferri possunt in objectum absens et abstractivè, sic possunt ferri sub conditione: *per tendentiam quidem actualem et absolutam in suo esse*; conditionalem tamen *objectivè*, hoc est, ex nunc amplexando illud objectum, *pro eo casu* quo posita sit



talis conditio. In quo non videtur posse esse controversia de re, sed de solo nomine.

“Sed quidquid sit de hoc, explicari potest etiam illa voluntas inefficax per *conditionalem implicitam*, hoc est, talem modum volendi, imperfectum et limitatum, ut non sit omninò absolutus et universalis, sed *cum limitatione intrinsecâ*. Certum enim videtur, quòd *intra ipsum genus voluntatis absolutæ*, dari possit aliqua *perfectior et efficacior quàm alia*: ut constat in actu perfecto dilectionis Dei super omnia; quo ità efficaciter voluntas fertur in Deum, ut explicitè vel implicitè comprehendat *omnes casus et conditiones possibles*, quibus *positis vel ablatis* adhuc afficitur erga Deum. E contra verò amor Dei vel creaturæ, non super omnia sed imperfectus, *licèt non sit explicitè conditionatus*, non est tamen ità *efficax*, quia *propter debilitatem intrinsecam* et imperfectum modum tendendi, eo ipso ostendit, quòd, *adveniente novâ difficultate* aut alio objecto meliori, facilè discedet ab hoc quod nunc amat. Sic se habet, qui putans equum posse haberi triginta aureis, *vult illum emere et habere*: non enim habet *omninò efficacem* amorem equi, sed *imperfectum et limitatum*; hoc est habendi illum *per tale medium*, seu quantum haberi potest per tale medium. Unde si postea videat non posse haberi *nisi centum aureis*, non *movetur efficaciter ab illo affectu priori* ad ponendum *tale medium difficilius*; et ideò ille prior affectus dici potest conditionatus implicitè seu *virtualiter*, quia *æquivalet huic*, ‘volo habere equum si *haberi potest pro triginta aureis*.’”

It appears indeed from the preceding number, and from the passage of Vasquez there quoted, that it is a controverted point whether the will can aim *at all* at a hypothetical bonum. Vasquez denies it; though Lugo seems to me most clearly right in affirming it. But both Vasquez and Lugo speak of it as a matter *absolutely certain among theologians*, that the will cannot *tend* to a bonum except

*directly*, and (as they even say) *absolutely*. Vasquez's words are, "Nullum actum voluntatis elicited præsentem *posse esse conditionatum*, sed omnem hujusmodi actum esse absolutum." In 1, 2, disp. 42, n. 10. On the point therefore at issue between my opponent and myself, both Vasquez and Lugo agree in holding my own position as *undoubted*.

70. I have already observed, that there is possibly some variety of usage among theologians as to their sense, when they say that one act is 'efficax' and another 'inefficax.' And I have in consequence carefully avoided allowing any part of my argument to turn on the question. But the above passage of Lugo's shows clearly in what sense *he* uses the term. He says expressly, that many an act is *inefficacious*, though no condition be explicitly in my mind, merely from its *intrinsic limitation*. He says also, in his last two sentences, that no act is 'omnino *efficax*,' which does not so aim at its end, that (remaining unchanged) it will impel me to that end (as they say) 'coûte qu'il coûte.'

I have been for an hour or so, almost at random, opening books, for the chance of obtaining some definite statement. I have found passages from Suarez, Bellarmine, Ripalda, Coninck, unmistakeably expressing the same doctrine with Lugo. On the other hand I have found one in Vasquez, where he seems to call any act 'efficacious' which leads to a practical result; technically, any 'intentio finis' would seem with him to be 'efficax,' which leads to an 'electio mediocrum.' If this be Vasquez's use of the term (which seems to me far from certain), he would still call acts W and Z by the same name, for both would be *efficacious*: since (as I have shown) act Z leads again and again to an 'electio mediocrum,' even while Y continues. Vasquez's passage is in 1, 2, disp. 43, n. 23-25.

That the word 'efficax,' at all events, has *always the same meaning* when applied to 'attritio' and 'propositum,' and

that, the very meaning which I have throughout maintained, is to my mind as certain, as any theological truth in the world which has not been totidem verbis defined. I have reasoned this out at length in chap. i. sec. 5; and may here bring together, from other parts of my Appendix, various subsidiary arguments. I will refer *e. g.* to the definition of 'efficax propositum' adopted by S. Alphonsus and Scavini (p. 84) '*aptum efficere id quod proponitur.*' I will cite Father Faure, who maintains that comparatively few, even of recidivi, even in the intervals of temptation, arrive at '*attritio summa, efficax, et universalis*' (see p. 117). He bases his whole argument on the *extreme severity* which must result in practise, if efficacious attrition were held necessary for Absolution. Nor can any one believe, that this very eminent theologian would have invented his own most extraordinary theory, if he had seen any possibility of representing an act of efficacious attrition, as an act *easily* elicited by an inveterate sinner. My opponent's view of 'efficacious attrition' then is certainly the extreme opposite, to Faure's. St. Alphonsus also declares (see p. 123) that even to a recidivus, even in the intervals of temptation, a real propositum is 'very difficult.' St. Alphonsus's notion then of a 'propositum efficax' is as opposed to my adversary's, as any one thing can well be to any other.

I will add another consideration of a more general character. My opponent is forward to maintain (and I most eagerly agree with him) that, according to his doctrine, a death-bed repentance is ordinarily one of the easiest things in the whole world. No one in his senses indeed could deny, that it *is* one of the easiest things in the whole world, for a dying man (unless preternaturally or otherwise assailed by violent temptation) to elicit such an act as would content my opponent; an act of preference to God's service, vaguely and dimly apprehended, over all possible antagonistic bona

according to that utterly unattractive shape with which his intellect at such a moment represents them. I say, if my opponent's doctrine were recognised, any one must be a madman to doubt the *extreme facility* of death-bed repentance. But Billuart says, that "according to the holy fathers and all theologians, it is *most rare and difficult*" (p. 46). Bourdaloue has a similar remark (p. 129, note), and even Francolinus says that such repentance is difficult (p. 127, note). My opponent's doctrine on attrition then is one which, according to Billuart and Bourdaloue, would be *repudiated by the holy fathers and all theologians*: and which is most certainly *rejected* by that most lenient of men, Francolinus. According to Layman and Escobar (p. 130) attrition is so difficult to the dying man, that unless he labours for *contrition*, his attainment of *attrition* is extremely doubtful. My opponent's doctrine then on attrition is immeasurably lower, than that of the indulgent Layman, and even of the singularly lax Escobar.

71. My opponent adduces a kind of mathematical argument against me. He says, 'act R, such an act as I represent to be alone 'efficacious,' is *impossible*. For since the 'attractiveness, with which antagonistic bona may be presented, is capable of *constant and indefinite increase*, what 'finite act can there be on the virtuous side, capable of counterbalancing (while it lasts) all *possible* attractiveness?' But the reply is most obvious; though, the objection being mathematical, the reply must be mathematical also. It is a fact, familiar to those who are conversant with the very elements of mathematics, that the case continually occurs of an *infinite series*, with a *finite limit* which it never reaches. Take the series  $1 + \frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{8} + \&c.$  ad infinitum. If you went on to the end of time adding a fresh term of this series, you will never reach the very humble limit of 2: though of course every fresh addition brings you nearer to it. The



fallacy of Achilles and the tortoise is solved by this simple consideration; and my opponent ought in consistency to say, that it is physically impossible for the swift Achilles ever to overtake the sluggish tortoise. It is proved to demonstration, that Achilles will not overtake the animal during a period represented by  $1 \text{ minute} + \frac{1}{10} + \frac{1}{10^2} + \frac{1}{10^3} + \&c. \text{ ad infinitum}$ ; and if that be *infinite* time, *never* will he outstrip his rival in the race. If then it be physically impossible for Achilles ever to reach the tortoise, then (and not otherwise) is *my act R* proved by this argument to be physically impossible.

Or putting the same thing in another shape. Take a force, represented by the number 2; it will always outbalance a combination of forces, represented by the successive numbers 1,  $\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $\frac{1}{4}$ , &c., in however vast and *literally interminable* an array you might choose to combine them.

There cannot then be a more simple and natural supposition, than that which I make. God, as I consider, has so constituted our nature, has so regulated the *possible* inordinateness of our will's movement towards pleasure, that although the attractiveness of delectabile in opposition to honestum be capable of endless increase, yet *there is a certain finite limit which it never reaches*. There is by consequence a certain finite act, directed towards honestum, which (while it lasts) must ever counterbalance any *possible* amount of pressure, that can tend towards delectabile. This act, as both authority and theological reason testify, is the lowest act which suffices for Absolution. Observe, I am not here *showing* that such an act is possible; I have already shown in n. 17 (p. 92, 93) that it is possible, and indeed very frequent. I am here but *replying* to reasoning, which purports to show that it is *impossible*. And let it not be said that I am here building a theological doctrine on a mathematical argument. My opponent brings forward an

argument, which does not profess to answer any part of my theological reasoning, but to contradict, on *other* grounds, the conclusion which *results* from that reasoning. Nothing of course can be more legitimate than his doing so; I only say, that it is *his* argument and not mine, which is of a mathematical character. A mathematical objection *can* only be met by a mathematical reply.

72. My opponent asks one final question. ‘If act R in ‘itself suffices (while it lasts) to counterbalance any possible ‘amount of antagonistic pressure, what reason can be given ‘why it should *not* last? how can any new exhibition of ‘pleasurable attractiveness tend to dislodge it?’ By making this objection, my opponent plunges me into the depths of psychological speculation; and no one of course will be able to understand either the objection or the answer, if he is not prepared to gird himself for some degree of painful thought. But whoever may choose to take this trouble, will readily see the radical misconception of my whole meaning, which such an objection implies.

And here again let me make a disclaimer, similar to that which I just now put forth. My own arguments have not been of a subtle or recondite psychological character; very far indeed from it. I have built my reasoning throughout, on *theological* grounds the most simple and obvious, and on *practical* grounds of the broadest and most common-sense character. As to my theological grounds, they have been (1) the expressed voice of the Church, (2) the most ordinary statements of theologians, (3) the rules most universally given to priests as claiming to regulate their practise, and (4) the most direct and simple inferences from these various premisses. As to my practical grounds, they have been simply the frightful and abominable impiety, which (as I maintain) must follow, were my opponent’s doctrine consistently adopted. My opponent indeed

has more or less *met* me on all these various grounds, and I have replied to his arguments. His *present* objection however *professes* to be *no* such reply ; but brings to bear against me a subtle and recondite psychological allegation. Nothing can be more legitimate than his adducing such an allegation : but the *answer* to an objection must of course be necessarily the same in character with the objection itself. I continue my reply then as follows :—

No two things can possibly be more distinct, than the two which this objection indiscriminately confuses : (1) the physical effect of act R while it lasts ; and (2) the greater or less degree of *difficulty* which I may find, either in originally eliciting that act, or afterwards continuing it. The latter depends, to a vast extent, on the degree of temptation which may assail me ; but it is simply unmeaning to say that the former fact depends on it in the very slightest degree. Let me make this evident.

God might have so formed us, that an act, *e.g.* of ‘*amor super omnia*,’ or any act incompatible with mortal sin, should be physically impossible. He *would* have so formed us, had the *possible* inordinateness of our will’s movement towards pleasure been capable, not merely of endless, but of *unlimited* increase (see n. 71, p. 174). On such an hypothesis, let the most efficacious act towards *good* be supposed which you choose to name, an act in which the will clings *ever so firmly and tenaciously* to bonum honestum,—yet an opposite act would be *physically possible*, so inordinately aiming at pleasure as to *counterbalance and overbear* the good act ; in which event of course the will’s *absolute* choice would be evil. There *could* then have been no act incompatible with mortal sin ; such an act would have been physically impossible ; in other words, would have been impossible, according to the constitution of that nature, which (on such an hypothesis) God would have given us.

It is perfectly certain however, both from authority and reason, that God has *not* so constituted our nature. From authority, because God himself has required of us, as the condition of Absolution, an act which *shall* be physically incompatible with mortal sin; as I have superabundantly demonstrated in the preceding pages. And from reason, for I am quite sure no one can possibly doubt, as a matter of every-day experience, the fact which I have stated, in n. 17 (p. 92). God then *has* so constituted our common nature, that (some universal motive being supposed) if my will should tend with greater and greater firmness or tenacity of adhesion to that motive, it would at length arrive at that *degree* of efficacy on which I have so much enlarged. At this point, my act of will, directed to the avoidance of all mortal sin, is no longer what Lugo calls ‘imperfectus et limitatus’ (see p. 171), but what he calls ‘omninò efficax.’ Its true analysis, in regard to such avoidance, is not ‘volo sub hâc vel illâ conditione,’ but ‘volo simpliciter et efficaciter.’

Now the question, raised by my opponent in connection with this, is as *totally distinct* from it, as any one thing *can* be from any other. It is one thing to say, that such an act, from the constitution of our nature, is *physically possible*; and a *totally different* thing to ask, how far this or that man, in these or those circumstances, will find it *easy or difficult* to elicit or continue such an act. To use my old illustration, it is *one thing* to ask what would be the physical effects, produced by a *blow* of given force or efficacy; and *quite another* thing to ask, how far this or that man, with this or that natural and acquired strength, in this or that state of health, encumbered with this or that weight, will find it easy to *deal forth* such a blow. It is in truth not less than simply *absurd* to argue; ‘because such an act, if it exists, must by physical



‘necessity counterbalance all possible temptation, *therefore*  
‘it must be *easy*, under the *pressure* of temptation, to elicit  
‘or to continue such an act.’

At the same time, having made this statement, I am most willing to enter directly *on* this perfectly distinct question which my opponent raises. And I am the more willing, because it really presents no difficulty at all. Take the mass of such men, as hardly aim ordinarily at more than the mere avoidance of mortal sin; I hold it as certain that these men will not commonly continue such an act as R, for more than a comparatively short period of time. I think this will be the case, even if temptation is away; but far *more* of course if temptation assails them. I proceed to give reasons for this opinion.

Supposing then temptation to be away, the reason why act R will ordinarily last but a short time with these men, is still very obvious. As considerable effort and exertion were originally required for producing it, so they are equally required for prolonging it. But no phenomenon of the human mind is more confessedly universal, than its moral inability to continue *for a long period* some unusual strain or effort, unless most extraordinary help be given. This consideration alone is amply sufficient to explain, how *immeasurably* more easy it is to elicit a ‘propositum affectivè efficax’ for a short period, than to carry on a ‘propositum effectivè efficax’ through a long duration of time (see p. 76). I adopt this phrase, as being so frequently used; though I still venture to think it (see p. 26) a somewhat ill-chosen expression.

But if we suppose some violent temptation to arise, the cause of act R ceasing is still more obvious. I have already said (see p. 76), that the case of a pious man, working towards good under temptation, is analogous to that of a strong man, labouring to strike a blow while he is

clogged with some cumbrous burden impelling his arms in quite a contrary direction. In both cases very far greater *effort* is necessary, for attaining a *given* efficacy. My opponent asks me to explain how this analogy holds; how it is, that temptation exercises this clogging and depressing influence on the will. Many answers could readily be given; but one will amply suffice. It is a matter of everyday experience, that the presence of temptation immediately *clouds the intellect*: it makes the perception of honestum to be very far less vivid; and by consequence, at the first instant, it indefinitely lessens the intrinsic efficacy of the good act. By means of co-operating with grace in the appropriate way,—in other words, of labouring earnestly with the help of prayer to banish evil thoughts and fix good thoughts more deeply in my intellect,—I may by degrees no doubt work my way back towards the original act R. But the remarks here made show most clearly, that very many good acts,—which would remain in my will easily and without effort when temptation is away,—cannot nevertheless be retained (in their full intrinsic efficacy) without the *greatest struggle and effort* when temptation is present. Much more easily therefore will *act R* yield under the pressure of temptation unless great effort be employed; since even in the *absence* of temptation, exertion was necessary to prolong it.

And this will throw further light on a remark made in the note at p. 86. I there refer to the imminent peril incurred by the penitent, if he allow himself to ponder unduly on temptations of a violent and alarming character, which may (or may not) possibly hereafter assail him. The *thought* of temptation is in itself the *presence* of temptation; such thoughts therefore have the strongest tendency, to cloud the intellectual perception of honestum, and so put an act W into the place of an act R.

I have now met without exception every single argument which this able opponent has brought forward; and I take my leave of him with every sentiment of personal affection and respect.\*

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#### OBJECTION IV.

##### *On the gift of Perseverance.*

73. I have been assailed on two opposite sides, for the remarks which I have made on this gift. It is obvious that it would carry me a great deal too far, if I aimed at doing any justice to this all-important question: and yet I may say something in my own defence. During this last half-year I have fulfilled the intention expressed in p. 69, and treated this subject in class. I may be permitted then at least, to state generally the principles which I advocated on the subject. And I may say at starting, that the one work which I take as my guide on the whole matter, is St. Alphonsus's beautiful treatise '*Il gran mezzo di Preghiera.*' My great object is, to bring the principles stated in that invaluable work into as definite a shape as possible; and apply them to solve the various and very great difficulties, which beset the subject.

74. On the one hand then it has been said, that in implying that I cannot think the majority of Catholics have any reason to expect salvation, I have represented this great gift as too difficult of attainment. The statement which I

\* As this opponent has taken all through a special ground of his own, it may be convenient to some readers if I here recapitulate the numbers which particularly refer to him. They are nn. 8, 9, 16, 17, 26, 62, 63: pp. 78, 79, 87-94, 104-110, 159-165.

have made to my pupils is this, as I expressed it in p. 69, that "it is easy for the well-instructed Catholic (in his years of health and strength) to comply with the requisite conditions; and easy also to have a most well-founded and consoling confidence that he does comply with them." And I put this doctrine before them, as a conclusion from the two following propositions. 1st. To every well-instructed Catholic, who with reasonable sincerity and earnestness (before the immediate prospect of death is imminent) desires and labours for his own inward sanctification, such graces are ever given by God in tempore opportuno, as to make his perseverance even *relatively* easy. 2d. To every well-instructed Catholic, by help of the grace which is given him at starting and throughout, it is relatively easy to *arrive* at such reasonable desire and labour for his own inward sanctification. Hence, since both steps in the process are relatively easy, the process itself, as a whole, is relatively easy also.

But if it be asked whether the majority of adult Catholics, or anything approaching to that number, *do* thus with reasonable earnestness desire and labour for their own inward sanctification, I confess my impression would be most strongly in the negative. And as to those who do not, I am at a loss to imagine, on what single revealed doctrine they can base any confident expectation that they will be saved. Of course, on this question as to the number of those who possess this desire, not only I may very easily be mistaken, but I should be beyond measure delighted if I could believe myself mistaken. But to my apprehension, the one great mystery which surrounds the whole question of Grace, and which (more than all other intellectual causes put together) has led to the chief heresies and errors on both extremes, is this; that what men not only can do, but can do with great *facility*, in the direction of virtue,—*that* (for



whatever reason) they do not *choose* to do. We need not go beyond Scripture itself, to see this mystery in the broadest point of view. Our blessed Lord tells us that His yoke is easy, and St. John that God's commandments are not heavy; yet who will maintain that the majority of Christians *perform* those light commandments, or *take on themselves* that easy yoke?

75. On the other hand, it has been objected, that in the above passage I represent the gift of perseverance as far more *secure*, far more capable of *certain* attainment, than true doctrine will warrant; that I have not given sufficient weight to St. Paul's exhortation, echoed by the Council of Trent on this very doctrine of Perseverance, that we work out our salvation in 'fear and trembling.' I can but answer briefly; for to make a detailed statement and defend it, must lead to a long digression. I have earnestly urged, that the consciousness of *fear* is throughout our one reliable ground of *hope*; that our sense of *insecurity* is our one pledge of security. I cannot myself think, that such a doctrinal statement as this is open to just exception.

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#### OBJECTION V.

*On the phrase 'charms or amulets.'*

76. I have used this phrase in p. 69, to describe that mode of using external religious objects, whereby we hope to obtain from them temporal or eternal blessings, without any advance in internal obedience. The phrase has been objected to; but I must say that, on reflection, the only thing I can regret, is the not having used *more severe* terms,

to characterise that detestable superstition against which my remarks were directed.

I shall express my meaning more clearly, by here answering a question which some have asked me. ‘Supposing a Catholic fell into mortal sin, should you regard it as a good sign that he throws away his scapular, or ceases to wear it?’ Respondeo distinguendo. ‘Absolutely a good sign?’ certainly not: ‘comparatively a good sign?’ this must depend on the other term of the comparison. It is much *better*, I think, that he should throw it away, than continue to wear it in *one* certain spirit which is conceivable; and much *worse* that he should throw it away, than continue to wear it in a certain *other* spirit which is conceivable.

77. Nothing is more common of course, than that Catholics commit mortal sin from mere infirmity of will. Such men very often, by continuing to wear the scapular, indicate that they have still the sincere wish of returning to a better mode of life; that they will not indeed bring themselves to go through that amount of prayer and effort, in correspondence with their existing grace, which would bring them back to a state of justification; but that neither will they abandon the hope, that God, through the intercession of that most tender Mother whose badge they still love to wear, will visit them with such more powerful grace, as may carry them back with far greater ease into God’s favour. It is, of course, quite immeasurably better that they should continue to wear the scapular in this spirit, than throw it away when they commit sin. Nor do I doubt in the least, that in very many cases their hope is fulfilled: that Mary does obtain for them, in return for their wearing her scapular, such more powerful grace; and that often enough they simply owe their eternal salvation to the happy fact of their having retained it.

78. But there is a most opposite spirit, in which it is equally conceivable that they may continue to wear the scapular while in a state of mortal sin. They may wear it, not because they are hoping for grace to help their infirm will, but for the very opposite reason. Such men wear it, because they wish to enjoy the pleasures of sin without disturbance from the fear of Hell. These sinners have somehow imbibed some grovelling and soul-destroying superstition, (proceeding probably in the first instance on a misconception of St. Simon Stock's vision),\* which leads them to suppose, that wearing the scapular *will* be such a security as above supposed; will obtain for them infallibly, that they shall have both opportunity and efficacious grace, leading them for certain to genuine repentance at the last. It is difficult to find fit words for expressing the atrocious nature of such conduct. Consider only this part of it, its cruel ingratitude. Mary, in Her tender love for mankind, has given them a fresh means for securing the most copious supplies of grace: and men are to be found so base, as to use this, Her gift, in direct opposition to Herself; to make it a pretext for resisting all those solicitations of grace, internal and external, which summon them to leave at once their evil ways and return to the service of God and His most holy Mother. I will not use my own words on this subject, but will defend myself by the authority of the Venerable Grignon de Montfort. This holy man, whose process of beatification (I believe) is now proceeding at Rome, has never been accused of any want of devotion to Mary—very much indeed the contrary—yet what are his words in characterising this superstition? He calls it ‘diabolical presumption;’ and adds, that had Mary made it a law to save by Her mercy *this sort of men*, She would have

\* How very gross a misconception, I have shown in p. 49.

*authorised crime, and assisted in outraging, in crucifying, Her Divine Son.\**

79. I am not considering the question ever so distantly, whether there *are* Catholics, and if any how many, who are plunged in this dark and dismal abyss of superstition. Here, as on so many other matters, one hears the most conflicting accounts from priests of practical experience.

\* “Les dévots présomptueux sont des pécheurs abandonnés à leurs passions, ou des amateurs du monde, qui, sous le beau nom de Chrétiens et de dévots à la Sainte-Vierge, cachent ou l'orgueil, ou l'avarice, ou l'impureté, ou l'ivrognerie, ou la colère, ou le jurement, ou la médisance, ou l'injustice, etc.; *qui dorment en paix dans leurs mauvaises habitudes, sans se faire beaucoup de violence pour se corriger*, sous prétexte qu'ils sont dévots à la Sainte-Vierge; qui se promettent que Dieu leur pardonnera; *qu'ils ne mourront pas sans confession, et qu'ils ne seront pas damnés*, parce qu'ils disent leur chapelet, parce qu'ils jeûnent le Samedi, parce qu'ils sont de la confrérie du saint Rosaire, ou Scapulaire, ou de ses congrégations, parce qu'ils portent le petit habit ou la petite chaîne de la Sainte-Vierge, etc. Quand on leur dit que *leur dévotion n'est qu'une illusion du diable et qu'une présomption pernicieuse capable de les perdre*, ils ne le veulent pas croire: ils disent que *Dieu est bon et miséricordieux*; qu'il ne nous a pas faits pour nous damner, qu'il n'y a homme qui ne pèche; *qu'ils ne mourront point sans confession*; qu'un bon ‘*peccavi*’ à la mort suffit; qu'ils sont dévots à la Sainte-Vierge, *qu'ils portent le scapulaire*; qu'ils disent tous les jours, sans reproche et sans vanité, sept Pater et sept Ave en son honneur; qu'ils disent même quelquefois le chapelet et l'office de la Sainte-Vierge; qu'ils jeûnent, etc. Pour confirmer ce qu'ils disent et *s'aveugler davantage*, ils apportent quelques histoires qu'ils ont entendues ou lues en des livres, vraies ou fausses, n'importe pas, qui font foi que des personnes mortes en péché mortel, sans confession, parce qu'elles avaient, pendant leur vie, dit quelques prières ou fait quelques pratiques de dévotion à la Sainte-Vierge, ou ont été ressuscitées pour se confesser, ou leur âme a demeuré miraculeusement dans leur corps jusqu'à la confession, ou, par la miséricorde de la Sainte-Vierge, ont obtenu de Dieu à leur mort la contrition et le pardon de leurs péchés, et par-là ont été sauvées; et qu'ainsi ils espèrent la même chose. Rien n'est si damnable, dans le Christianisme, que cette présomption diabolique, car peut-on dire avec vérité qu'on aime et qu'on honore la Sainte-Vierge, lorsque par ses péchés on pique, on perce, on crucifie et on outrage impitoyablement Jésus-Christ son fils? Si Marie se faisait une loi de sauver par sa miséricorde ces sortes de gens, elle autoriserait le crime, elle aiderait à crucifier, à outrager son Fils; qui oserait jamais penser?”—Traité de la Vraie Dévotion à la S. Vierge, &c., pp. 73–75.



But it is very important that we should all have clear views, as to what judgment should be passed on such practises, *supposing* they were to exist in any given time or place. And I have now, I think, by taking this one instance of the scapular, sufficiently explained and defended the opinion which I intended to express.

### CONCLUSION.

There are no other tangible objections, which have come to my knowledge as having been expressed against the doctrine of my Five Lectures; and here therefore I come to a close.

I have heard indeed general statements about ‘rigorism,’ ‘semi-Jansenism,’ and the like: but whatever force of argument may really lie hid under such general statements, it must be obvious to any one that it is impossible to answer such arguments, until they are produced in a more definite and palpable form. Meanwhile, I would earnestly entreat these objectors, in justice both to themselves and to the subject, to consider earnestly before God this question—*can* that be a *true* representation of the Christian religion, which places it before the mind as *simply* genial, cheerful, and attractive? Can that religion be *simply* genial and attractive, which declares that for the smallest mortal sin, unforgiven at the moment of death, there is stored up an eternity of torment, at the very thought of which human nature recoils in horror? Every age has its very serious evils; and I am not meaning necessarily to imply, that this age is worse than others. But the present age certainly has this fault,—and a more deeply injurious one can hardly be conceived,—that it tends in every direction to put out of sight the *severe* side of religion. Out of the true fold, this tendency has openly displayed itself, in the singular movement against belief in Hell altogether, which has attracted

so much attention during the last few years. I think we have great cause for anxiety, lest a tone of thought and feeling should intrude even within the Church, which (without being expressly heretical) may have a certain subtlè, but most real, affinity to this evil spirit without. I for one cannot think ‘rigorism,’ the *only* side on which our danger lies at the present moment.

And here let me remark on two totally different things, often denoted by this word ‘rigorism ;’ things so completely different, that even if both of them were wrong, it would still be the greatest possible mistake to call them by the same name. The rigorism against which such severe things have so justly been said, is that odious system, which bears severely on those who *sincerely wish to serve God*, while their will is yet infirm, and past evil habits powerful. It is that system, which represents Christ’s easy yoke as hard and insupportable ; which violently exaggerates the obligations and the difficulties of interior religion, while it is silent on its many sweetnesses and consolations. But there is another mode of thought altogether, which occasionally goes by the same name. It is sometimes called ‘rigorism,’ to speak in the severest terms, both as to the present state and future prospects of those, who are not seeking *at all* to serve God, but are giving themselves unreservedly to the world and the flesh ; whose will is not tending infirmly to the Creator, but tending very energetically to the enjoyment of creatures ; who are constantly quenching grace, and live on the whole in indifference to religion. I say frankly, if it be rigorism to urge on such men as these that nothing can be more gloomy than their future prospects, however faithfully they wear the scapular, or however firmly they resolve to send for a priest at the hour of death—if this be rigorism, I am in no way ashamed of being its earnest and hearty advocate.\* So much on rigorism.

\* I had drawn the same contrast in my libellus ‘de obduratorum

There is however another vague objection, which has been brought against my Five Lectures; viz. that they are irreverent towards the sacraments, and disrespectful towards the priesthood. As to *this* objection, I must say I am sceptical whether there is *any* kind of argument lying hid under this general statement. I have attempted, but in vain, to give it some substantial form with which I can grapple; and I am simply lost in amazement at the charge. Certainly I have urged, that the presence of a priest at the last cannot compensate for the absence of sufficient disposition; but I should be simply a heretic if I said anything else. And I have also urged, that the presence of a priest by no means ensures the presence of this good disposition; but I really never heard of any single Catholic, lay or clerical, theological or

peccatis mortalibus,' (p. 67, n. 2.)—"Deinde, 'rigorismi' cujusdam aliquis forsân hæc placita insimulabit. Sed quàm immeritò! Nemo forsân in orbe terrarum rigorismo infensior est, quàm me esse profitear. Sed in quo consistit præcipua rigorismi labes? Proculdubio in illos sævire, qui ex certâ malitiâ Deo morem gerere totis viribus recusant, qui præcepta ejus oderunt simul atque contemnunt,—in hos sævire, non rigorismi, est sed sanæ theologiæ. In illos autem sævit rigorismus, qui ex bono corde in Dei amicitia manere cupiunt, quorum 'manus' tamen sunt 'remissæ, et genua soluta;' qui non adhuc erectè ambulant, sed claudicant; qui, ob pravos habitus in quibus diù olim illaqueati sunt, lenitate maximâ et quasi manuactione indigent; quorum ad salutem quàm maximè pertinet, ut oblectamenta varia suppetant, quæ animum sublevant et recreent, donec paullatim veterem hominem magis magisque exuant, donec paullatim 'manus remissas et soluta genua erigant,' donec paullatim eorum 'bases et plantæ consolidentur.' In hos sævit rigorismus; in horum 'cervices jugum imponit quod portare non possunt;' harum animarum ruinæ non rarò est causa.

"Quid autem commune, inter exosum illum rigorismum, et hanc quam nos tuemur S. Thomæ sententiam? Sententiæ quidem *contrariæ* longè affiniore est rigorismus; de illâ enim, etiam magis quàm de rigorismo, dici posset,

'Ignoscit corvis, vexat censura columbas.'

In illos etenim sævit, qui magnam aliquam de Deo diligendo velleitatem saltem retinent, et ab Illo oculos omninò avertere non possunt; illis autem omninò parit, qui Creatoris infinitè Misericordis prorsus obliviscuntur. Obduratos hos, 'quasi modò genitos infantes,' vix posse peccare, mira illa sententia pronuntiat."

untheological, who ventured in so many words to say that it does. However, if any one will kindly explain to me, what that proposition of mine is, which he regards as either irreverent towards the sacraments, or disrespectful towards the priesthood, I will take every pains either to explain such proposition, or to express my deepest regret and shame at having put it forth.

And I will end by making one remark, with which my most extreme opponents will be the most ready to concur. There cannot be a more vitally momentous question than this which I have raised; or one on which it is more important that true opinions should prevail. So far as I know myself, here is no one thing which I desire more eagerly, than that if my statements are mistaken, they may fail in convincing any one of my readers; and further, that the opposing truths may as soon as possible be brought by God's mercy to shine on my own mind. There is one way therefore, in which any priest, who considers me mistaken, may both believe himself surely advancing his own cause, and also confer on me what I should feel as an inestimable benefit. It is that he will offer as often as possible the Adorable Sacrifice with a suitable intention. I would beg him to offer it with *this* intention, that on this, and all kindred practical subjects, we may all be brought by God's enlightening grace more and more into harmony with each other, (1) as to what are the precise and the full doctrines contained in the Church's decrees and practical teaching; and (2) as to what is the *spirit* in which she teaches those respective doctrines: what is the comparative importance, the relative position, which she practically assigns to each. May God give to all of us, more and more, the grace of truly knowing this! Empty and worthless indeed is all secular knowledge in comparison.



NOTE TO p. 80, FIRST PARAGRAPH OF n. 12.

*On the relation of the terms 'efficacy' and 'intensity.'*

ON looking over the sheets for the last time, it has occurred to me, that my desire of brevity has here led me into an omission, which might appear unfair. The fact is, that there are various matters of doctrine, specially on the 'de actibus humanis,' which are closely connected with the subject before us; and which, nevertheless, it is quite impossible to treat satisfactorily, in the very small degree of leisure which I possess. I have wished therefore to avoid all allusion to such matters, however much they might have strengthened my argument, so far as they were not absolutely necessary to its construction. And so here a question may be asked, on which I have not directly spoken. 'There is certainly a quality of 'human acts, mentioned in theology under the name of *intensity*. 'Do you consider this the *same* quality with *efficacy*? If *not*, 'how can you say that there are but *two* qualities, mentioned in 'theology as describing the will's mode of tending to a bonum 'honestum? But if *yes*, then this should be distinctly stated.'

I think this remark would be reasonable. Before answering the question however, I will make clear the *lie* of my argument. No one ever doubted, or could possibly doubt, that there *is* such a quality in human acts, as that which I describe in pp. 74, 75, and call by the name of efficacy. I have drawn out an argument, purporting to show that, according to the most certain doctrine of the Church, an act, sufficient for Absolution, must possess this quality in a certain very considerable degree. This argument will be found in chap. i.

sect. 1, 2, 3, 5, and in chap. iii. sect. 3: I am perfectly confident, that no one can fairly give his mind to it, without being convinced that my statement is true.

This argument does not depend *in the slightest degree* on my allegation, that theologians *use* the word 'efficacy' to *express* this quality: though I am very sure that no one can attend to the quotations which I adduce and the appended remarks, without seeing that *this is the case*.

Now the word 'intensity' beyond question from time to time occurs, in treatises 'de actibus humanis;' and it is a matter of some importance in itself, though wholly irrelevant to my argument, to determine whether *this* word also has the same sense, which I ascribe to the word 'efficacy.' For myself, I confess that, in regard to acts which tend to bonum honestum, I have never been able to understand any meaning of the word 'intensity,' except the very same which is also expressed by the word 'efficacy.' It is for this reason indeed, that I have made that remark in the text on which this note is a comment. It is the bias of my own opinion then, that to this extent the words are synonymous: though I am far from wishing to express myself confidently on the matter, but would rather solicit the judgment of theologians.

The only bearing which this question of *words* can possibly have, on the *doctrine* discussed in my Lectures and Appendix, is the following. It is frequently said by theologians, that neither in attrition, contrition, nor sovereign love, need there be any certain degree of *intensity*. And I might be asked to explain what they mean by this, if intensity is the same quality with efficacy. To this however I reply very easily.

No one can possibly maintain, that *every* act, directed to the due motive, *however* faint and languid, is an act of 'amor super omnia,' and justifies extra sacramentum. On such a view indeed, the words 'super omnia' would be simply without meaning; and, at all events, I have most fully rebutted any such opinion in the course of my reasoning. See *e.g.* pp. 98–100. Every one then must admit, that a *certain* fixed degree

of efficacy is requisite for an act of sovereign love; and if efficacy *be* the same with intensity, then a certain fixed degree of intensity is required for such an act. Lugo (see p. 100) contrasts it with the '*debilitas*' of an act *not* super omnia; and Marinus speaks of it as '*itâ ardens ut sit incomponibilis*,' &c.

On this hypothesis therefore, the meaning of the above theological statement is most certainly that which I have assigned in p. 95, n. 19. The requisite act must give a *preference* to the Creator over creatures, but that preference need not be *intense*. Yet it will still remain true, that in order to such preference being *real*, a certain very considerable amount of efficacy (or intensity) is required. And this meaning is made abundantly intelligible, by considering the errors which the expression was intended to oppose. Certain mediæval writers *e. g.* maintained, that an act of sovereign love must be '*super omnia intensivè*:' (see p. 17), that the act of love must be more *intense* than any act directed to delectabile. To this modern theologians have always answered '*quis certus gradus intensionis designari potest?*' A good act, more intense than any *assignable* act directed to delectabile, is physically impossible. '*Amor super omnia*' must be such '*appretiatiuè*;' it need not be '*intensivè*,' and indeed *cannot* be so. See again pp. 17, 18. So Suarez: '*S. Thomas ait . . . dolorem voluntatis adeò remissum esse posse, ut non sufficiat ad contritionem. Sed loquitur de remissione essentiali, seu objectivâ, seu appretiatiuâ: hæc enim omnia æquivalent.*' (De Pœn. disp. 4, sect. 4, col. 3.) And Lugo says: '*Non negamus expedire ut conetur peccator summâ intensione dolere; tum ut certior sit pœnitentia, tum ut,*' &c. (de Pœn. disp. 5, n. 87), *i. e.* that he may be more *sure* of attaining that *degree* of efficacy or intensity, which is requisite that the act may *be* an act of real repentance. And just before: '*Possumus Deum diligere super omnia, et tunc habemus summam et firmissimam adhæSIONem; possumus etiam Deum diligere, non tamen super omnia, sed*

aliquo inferiori et *debiliori* amore.' (Ibid. n. 77.) If an act of sovereign love is *less* 'debilis,' I suppose it is *more* 'intense.'

If, on the other hand, the quality of intensity be *different* from that which I have described as efficacy, (pp. 74, 75), then of course such quality need not exist *in any degree at all* in the acts of attrition and contrition. For myself however, as I said, I am wholly unable to imagine what such other quality there can possibly be.









